(Shakespeare)

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COMMENTARIES

ON THE

HISTORICAL PLAYS

OF

SHAKSPEARE.

BY THE RIGHT HON.

THOMAS PEREGRINE COURTENAY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE greater part of the following Commentaries was published in the popular Miscellany* edited by Theodore Hook, whose approbation, as a man equally acute and amiable, is very gratifying to me: this preface contains the substance of the observations with which I introduced my papers to the public.

It was not without real diffidence that I attempted further comments upon Shakspeare. I do not affect to have discovered new beauties in that writer, nor can I boast of the power to place in a more striking light, those which have now for some ages delighted the readers of the English language. But it appeared

* New Monthly Magazine, June 1838 to March 1839; under the title of 'Shakspeare's Historical Plays considered historically.'

to me, that (after all the volumes which have been written) there are points of view in which a large portion of the works of Shakspeare are still to be considered.

The reader has, doubtless, heard it observed, that the youth of England take their religion from Milton, and their history from Shakspeare. Coleridge tells us, that the great Duke of Marlborough acknowledged that his principal acquaintance with English history was derived from the historical plays.* Lord Chatham is said to have made a similar avowal: and Southey has recently told us that his boyish knowledge of history came from the same source.† Coleridge quotes from Bishop Corbet, who wrote in the time of James the First, the proof, that, in his time, the middling classes were familiarly acquainted with these plays, and referred to them for English history.

I presume that Coleridge's allusion is to the *Iter Boreale*, a poetical description of the writer's tour through some of the northern and midland counties. Speaking of an innkeeper at Bosworth, he says:—

* Coleridge's Literary Remains, ii. 166.

† Works, i. viii.

" Mine host was full of ale and history,
And in the morn when he brought us nigh
Where the two Roses join'd, you would suppose
Chaucer ne'er made the romaunt of the Rose.
Hear him. See you yon wood? There Richard lay
With his whole army. Look the other way,
And, lo! while Richmond in a bed of gorse
Encamp'd himself all night, and all his force:
Upon this hill they met. Why, he could tell
The inch where Richmond stood, where Richard fell.
Besides what of his knowledge he could say,
He had authentic notice from the play;
Which I might guess by marking up the ghosts
And policies not incident to hosts;
But chiefly by that one perspicuous thing,
Where he mistook a player for a king.
For when he would have said, King Richard died,
And call'd, a horse! a horse! he, Burbage cried."*†

It is well known that Shakspeare is much read and highly estimated in Germany. I have, indeed, heard it affirmed by Germans, that they now set a higher value upon him than even we his country-

* A well-known actor. It has been conjectured from Corbet's lines that Shakspeare's plays were at this early period performed *in the country;* but it would appear, from the mention of Burbage, that mine host had seen 'Richard the Third' acted in London.

† Bishop Corbet's Poems by Gilcrist, p. 193.

men; and I am not certain but that, if the comparison is made with the rising generation of Englishmen, the statement is true. This remark would, perhaps, have been more just, a few years ago. If I am right in supposing that, since the days of my childhood, the English youth had become less and less familiar with Shakspeare, there are symptoms, within a very few years, of a revival of the former taste. Shakspeare has been presented to us in a variety of new editions, some cheap, some beautiful, some both. But, if it be true that the taste for Shakspeare was for a time suspended in England, it flourished at that time in Germany.

Both the Schlegels have particularly celebrated the historical plays. Augustus William Schlegel says, that—

"Shakspeare imbibed the spirit of Roman history, and that that of his own country was known to him in its smallest details."

Again—

"The plays drawn from the history of England are in number ten, and form, when united, one of the works of Shakspeare which has the truest merit, and which was composed, at least in part, in the perfect maturity of his talents. It is not unadvisedly, that I say *a work,*

because it is clear that the poet has brought together all the parts, so as to form one great whole. It is a magnificent dramatic *Epopée*, of which the separate pieces are different cantos. *The principal traits in every event are given with so much correctness, their apparent causes and their secret motives are given with so much penetration, that we may therein study history, so to speak, after nature*, without fearing that such lively images should ever be effaced from our minds. But this series of tragedies is calculated to give a lesson yet more extensive and elevated; it offers examples applicable to all times of the march of public affairs; and this mirror for kings ought to be the manual of young princes. There they will learn how noble is their vocation, and how difficult their position; they will see there the dangers of usurpation, the inevitable destruction of the tyranny which undermines its own foundations while seeking to strengthen them; there they will contemplate the consequences so fatal to nations and for whole ages, which result from the crimes, the faults, and even the foibles of the head of a state."*

I propose to inquire whether this commendation is the result of an enviable enthusiasm, or of an accurate research. But I pray that it may be well understood, that if in any case I derogate from Shakspeare as an historian, it is as an historian only.

* Cours de Littérature Dramatique, iii. 93.

Never had poet a better right to use freely the licence allowed to poets, or less necessity for drawing upon unpoetical stores for any portion of his fame.

It has been observed that Shakspeare was no inventor of plots, and that for every one of his plays (with the exception perhaps of the "Merry Wives of Windsor," said to have been written by royal command,) there is an original to be found, in the shape of an Italian novel or otherwise.

Some even of his historical plays were formed, not immediately upon the history, but upon older plays of little worth. And either he, or his more ancient author, has taken such liberties with facts and dates, and has omissions so important, as to make the pieces, however admirable as a drama, quite unsuitable as a medium of instruction to the English youth.

It would be a difficult, and, perhaps, useless inquiry, whether Shakspeare had a systematic design to teach history through the stage, or merely adopted the stories of Holinshed, as he did those of Boccaccio. Nor do I think it necessary to inquire whether his deviations from the truth of

history were carefully adopted in order to the perfection of the play, or were the results of carelessness or misinformation. William Schlégel * says that most of his anachronisms were designed for an essential end. I believe that very few *periods* of history could be dramatised with good effect; and, therefore, that to make a good play, it is necessary to take great liberties. As the construction of a good play was, or ought to have been, Shakspeare's first object, we shall, perhaps, find reason to lament his adherence to historical models, rather than his departure from them.

Coleridge is of opinion, and I think that he is right, that only striking and poetical events can be pleasantly dramatised; yet he appears to approve of historical plays for the instruction of youth. To reconcile these two opinions, it would be necessary to choose for each play at least one great event, important as well as dramatic; and, where a *reign* is represented, that event of the reign with which it is most desirable to impress the young mind.

" In order that a drama may be *properly historical*, it

* Vol. ii. 360.

is necessary that it should be the history of the people to whom it is addressed. In the composition, care must be taken that there appear no dramatic improbability, as the reality is taken for granted. It must likewise be poetical; that only, I mean, must be taken which is permanent in our nature, which is common, and, therefore, deeply interesting, to all ages. The events themselves are immaterial, otherwise than as the clothing and manifestation of the spirit that is working within. In this mode, the unity resulting from succession is destroyed, but is supplied by a unity of a higher order, which connects the events by reference to the workers, gives a reason for them in the motives, and presents them in their causative character. It takes, therefore, that part of real history which is least known, and infuses a principle of life and organization to the naked facts, and makes them all the framework of an animated whole. . . . . An historic drama is, therefore, a collection of events borrowed from history, but connected together in respect of cause and time, poetically, and by dramatic fiction. It would be a fine national custom to act such a series of dramatic histories in orderly succession, in the yearly Christmas holidays, and could not but tend to counteract that mock cosmopolitism, which under a peculiar term really implies nothing but a negation of, or indifference to, the particular love of our country."*

* Coleridge's Literary Remains, ii. 159.

Frederick Schlegel praises Shakspeare for the absence of this cosmopolitism.

"The feeling by which he seems to have been most connected with ordinary men is that of nationality. He has represented the heroic and glorious period of English history, during the conquests in France, in a series of dramatic pieces, which possess all the simplicity and liveliness of the ancient chronicles, but approach, in their ruling spirit of patriotism and glory, to the most dignified and effective productions of the epic muse."*

That Shakspeare had a deeply-rooted love of his country, many passages of affectionate admiration of England sufficiently show. And some of these are to be found in that truly "glorious period of English history" which is represented in the play of Henry V. Yet this passage is a specimen of the carelessness of historical critics. The sequel to Henry V. is a play of little merit, and probably not Shakspeare's, and certainly records little of glory or success.

But, whatever opinion may be formed upon any of these topics, I cannot think that, after all that has been said of Shakspeare as a teacher of history, as well as a poet, the inquiry upon which I now purpose

* Lectures on the History of Literature, ii. 147.

to enter will be altogether uninteresting, namely, *what were Shakspeare's authorities for his history, and how far has he departed from them? And whether the plays may be given to our youth, as "properly historical?"* The inquiry has not been anticipated by any of the commentators. Steevens and Malone have each a few historical notes; but the range of their historical criticism is extremely small, and the former is sometimes careless.

In the present work I have included the plays which Shakspeare founded upon the Scottish and the Roman histories; and have added some general observations.

It may be convenient to mention the editions which have been used, of some of the books to which reference is made.

Lingard's History of England, 5th edit. 12mo.
Turner's History, 3d edit. 8vo.
Hume's History, 8vo. 1818.
Matthew Paris, 1640.
Hall, 4to. 1809.
Holinshed, 4to. 1807.

Hardyng, 4to. 1812.
Monstrelet, 4to., transl.
Grafton, 4to. 1809.
Fabyan, 4to. 1811.
Walsingham, in Camden, 1602.
Otterbourne, Whethanstede, } Hearne, 1732
Elmham—Hearne, 1727.
Knighton, in Twysden, 2296.
Stow, 1631.
Polydore Vergil, 1556.
Continuation of Croyland Register, in Gale, i.
Leland's Collectanea, 1770.
Will. Wyrcester, Hearne, 1773.
Bishop Lesley, the Latin edit.
Hallam's Middle Ages, 8vo. 1829.
North's Plutarch, 1696.
Niebuhr's Rome, transl. 1831.
Ferguson's Rome, 4to.
Sismondi, Hist. des Français, 8vo. 1821, &c.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.

Page 68, line 20, *for* a *read* on.
152, note ‡, *for* No. ccxii. 474 *read* p. 104.
213, note *, *for* 1439 *read* 1449.
239, line 6, *for* Nicholas *read* Nicolas.

VOL. II.

Page 5, note ‡, *dele* James.
11, after line 19, *insert* The killing of Rutland by Clifford is from Holinshed.
14, line 14, *for* creation *read* creature.
37, line 13, *for* 1671 *read* 1471.
113, line 12, *dele* Although.
line 21, *before* His *insert* For.
137, line 2 of note, *for* dudid *insert* du dit.
184, note *, *for* Bœce *read* Boece.
200, note §, line 2, *after* be *read* the.
290, line 6-7, *for* Coleride *read* Coleridge.

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KING JOHN.

THIS is the first in chronological order of the historical plays. Steevens* mentions it with others as closely following Hall, Holinshed, Stow, and other chroniclers; but he mentions also an old play, ("The troublesome Reign of King John,")† of which the author is not exactly known. I cannot concur with Steevens in thinking it possible that Shakspeare himself wrote this play; but he certainly took from it the outline of his plot, and some of his scenes. We shall judge, in going through his play, whether he went any further for his history.

That old play is itself supposed,‡ upon the slightest possible evidence, to have been taken from a still older performance, which had for its author John Bale, the first Protestant Bishop of Ossory, whose object was to expose, by a reference to the

* Boswell's edition, xv. 194.

† In six old plays, Leacroft, i. 217.

‡ See Pictorial Shakspere, p. 6.

history of the reign of John, the abuses of the Romish church.* But it is very doubtful whether this play was seen by the author of the other.

The first impression conveyed by Shakspeare's play is, that the young Prince Arthur had a legitimate claim to the crown of England, that the crown was usurped by his uncle John, and that the King of France, having summoned John, by his ambassador Chatillon, to surrender the crown, forthwith declared war against him, in order to put Arthur in possession of his right.

"The succession of John," says Hallam,† "has certainly passed in modern times for an usurpation. I do not find that it was considered as such by his own contemporaries on this side the Channel;"‡ and the same well-informed author shows, that the preference of a nephew to a brother, in the line of succession, was by no means an established rule of the law of England. Shakspeare himself is mainly responsible for the prevalency of this belief of usurpation. I do not say he created it, because he found it in the old play.

Our poet places King John at Northampton, where he is thus addressed by Chatillon, the ambassador of France:—

* J. P. Collier's preface to *King John*, p. vii.

† See also Blackstone, i. 200, and Nicolas' Chronology of History, p. 306.

‡ Middle Ages, ii. 473.

" Philip of France, in right and true behalf
Of thy deceased brother Geffrey's son,
Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim
To this fair island and the territories;
To Ireland, Poitiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,
Desiring thee to lay aside the sword
Which sways usurpingly these several titles,
And put the same into young Arthur's hand."*

Now, I do not find, either in Holinshed, or in any other history, English or French, that Chatillon, or any other diplomatic agent, was sent by Philip Augustus to John; or that the crown of *England* was demanded by the French King on the part of Arthur. Philip apparently, and with reason, disclaimed an interest in the disposal of that crown; whereas, of the transmarine possessions of the Kings of England, as well as of Brittany, he claimed to be lord paramount.

Commentators have already shewn that the introduction of the Archduke of Austria is a mistake borrowed from the old play. Leopold, the Duke of Austria, by whom Richard was thrown into prison, died in 1195; the Limoges, who in a subsequent scene is confounded with him, was the owner of the castle of Chaluz, before which Richard was slain.†

* Act i. Sc. 1.

† See Bosw. p. 221, 270. It appears from the Patent Rolls (Hardy, p. 43) that Limoges was taken at Mirabeau, and that he negotiated with John for a peace.

John was beyond seas when his brother Richard died, and sent over to England Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, and William Marshall, Earl of Striguill (afterwards Pembroke), who assembled at Northampton "the estates of the realm,"* or, as it appears from ancient chroniclers,† the Earls and Barons only; who then resolved to support the claim of John.

It is not clear whether the King of France immediately espoused the cause of Arthur, or whether he hesitated a little; but it is certain that his hesitation did not last, as hostilities soon commenced on the French side of the Channel; and within a month of Richard's death, a truce of fifty days was concluded between Philip and John, to terminate on the 15th of August, 1199. Meanwhile, John had come to England, and had been presented to the people at Westminster, after a speech from Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he is supposed to have said nothing of hereditary right, but to have recommended John for election, on the ground of his personal merits. This speech has occasioned an historical controversy, having been supposed to prove that our monarchy was elective; Holinshed professes to take it from Matthew Paris; but he leaves out the preface, in which the monk

* Holinshed, p. 273. † Hoveden, in Script. post Bedam, p. 793, and M. Paris, p. 196.

gives a *preference* to the claimant by hereditary right. Carte supposes it to have been an invention of Matthew, especially as Hoveden, a contemporary, does not mention it.* On hearing it, we are told, "divers held their peace, and many with great zeal saluted King John," who was forthwith crowned by Hubert. Neither the ceremony nor the speech is mentioned by Shakspeare.

Philip had meanwhile knighted (now or after the renewal of the war, but it is no matter) young Arthur, at this time little more than twelve years old; and had taken his homage for the transmarine possessions of his deceased uncle, as well as for his own province of Brittany: and he began a war by invading the duchy of Normandy; while the Breton subjects of Arthur took Angers (the capital of Anjou), of which town we hear so much in Shakspeare.

Thierry,† who has written the History of England for a period following the Norman Conquest, with a special reference to *the distinction of races*, has cited from one of our old chroniclers‡ a circumstance concerning Arthur, which is unnoticed by our historians. The young prince was born after his father's death; Henry the Second, his

* See Turner, i. 405.

† "Hist. de la Conquête de l'Angleterre, par les Normans," iii. 93, and iv. 144.

‡ Walter de Hemingford, in Gale, ii. 507.

grandfather, desired to give him his own name; but the Bretons on the south side of the Channel had a superstition, which perhaps still lingers among the mountains of Wales, or in the patriotic breast of my friend Charles Wynn, concerning the name of *Arthur*; and that name was given to the prince, with great solemnity, at his baptism. "And thus," writes the chronicler, "the Bretons, who are said to have for a long time expected a fabulous Arthur, now cherished a true one with great expectations, according to an opinion predicted in grand and celebrated stories concerning Arthur."*

I do not know precisely what the great deeds were, which the fabulous Arthur of old times was supposed to perform. It may be doubted whether they exceeded those which the real and true Arthur of our days has accomplished.

Shakspeare is correct in placing Angers in the possession neither of John nor Philip, after the return of John from England;† and it is true that,

* Daru says, "Arthur était un héros cher aux Bretons; il avait été le compagnon de leur roi Hoel-le-grand. Quoiqu'il fut mort depuis plus de six cents ans, on attendait toujours sa venue: Merlin l'avait prédite. La crédulité populaire attachait à ce nom des idées de gloire, et de délivrance. Il était évident que ce choix était un symptôme du mécontentement de la domination des Plantagenets." — *Hist. de Bretagne*, i. 377.

† June, 1199.

just before the expiration of the truce, a personal conference took place between the kings near Butevant; which, I suppose, is that which the poet describes as occurring under the walls of Angers, when he again makes Philip, without any warrant in history, the champion of Arthur's claim to the crown.

The unlady-like scolding of Elinor, the mother of John, and Constance, the mother of Arthur, is a well-known feature in the play; it is a creation of the poet, suggested probably by a short passage in Holinshed, quoted by Malone.*

"Surely Queen Elinor, the king's mother, was sore against her nephew Arthur, rather moved thereto by envy conceived against his mother, than upon any just occasion given on behalf of the child; for that she saw if he were king, how that his mother Constance would look to bear most rule within the realm of England, till her son should come of lawful age to govern of himself. So hard it is to bring women to agree in one mind, their natures commonly being so contrary, their words so variable, and their deeds so indiscreet; and therefore it was well said of one, alluding to their disposition and properties, *nulla diu fœmina pondus habet*."†

Of the character of Elinor we know something: Malone takes for granted, without sufficient authority, her infidelity to her first husband, Lewis the

* Bosw. xv. 227. † Prop. lib. 2.

Seventh of France; but that she was an ambitious and high-spirited person is sufficiently proved by her conduct to her second husband, against whom she joined her sons in rebellion. Of Constance we know little, for certainly Holinshed's account of Elinor's opinion of her is of no authority. Nor does it appear that these two princesses ever met. According to Shakspeare, Elinor was conscious of the weakness of her son's title.

"*King John.* Our strong possession and our right, for us.

"*Eli.* Your strong possession much more than your right;
Or else it must go wrong with you and me:
So much my conscience whispers in your ear;
Which none but Heaven, and you, and I, shall hear."*

But when arguing in public, she cited a will of Richard Cœur de Lion:—

"*Eli.* Thou unadvised scold, I can produce
A will that bars the title of thy son."

There is contemporary authority for the dying declaration of Richard in favour of John,† though he had formerly declared Arthur his heir.

The character of Constance (who was now about forty or forty-five years old) was not entirely unsuspected; after the death of Geoffrey, she had been married, as we are told, by her father-in-law,

* Act i. Sc. 1. † Hoveden, p. 791.

Henry, to Ralph, Earl of Chester; but she was divorced from this earl at the persuasion, as some say,* of the profligate John, who himself "haunted" her; she afterwards married, as we shall see, a third husband.

The dramatist has passed over some vicissitudes in the life of Arthur, previous to the marriage of Blanche, which might perhaps have produced interesting scenes. Although Philip, in his fruitless negociation with John, had demanded Anjou and other provinces for Arthur, he made use of his auxiliary force in a way more conducive to his own interests than to those of the young prince. Having taken one of Arthur's towns, he razed the fortifications; this so offended Arthur's general, La Roches, that he advised the prince to make a peace with his uncle, to whom he fled from Paris,† "though the same served but to small purpose." Some towns were, in consequence of this treaty, given up to John;

"but in the night following, upon some mistrust and suspicion, gathered in the observation of the covenants on King John's behalf, both the said Arthur, with his mother Constance, the Viscount of Touars, and divers others, fled away secretly from the king, and got them to the city of Angers, where the mother of the said Arthur, refusing her former husband the Earl of Chester,

* Leland, Coll. i. 535. † Thierry, iv. 147.

married herself to the Lord Guy de Touars, brother to the said viscount, by the Pope's dispensation."*

John went to England; and it was now that Arthur and his mother had, in truth, quarrelled, as well with Philip as with John, that the two kings came to the agreement which excited, according to Shakspeare, the indignation of Constance, so forcibly represented in the play.

"Finally, upon the Ascension-day, in the second year of his reign, they came eftsoons to a communication between the towns of Vernon and Lisle Dandelu, where finally they concluded an agreement with a marriage to be had betwixt Lewis, the son of King Philip, and the Lady Blanche, daughter to Alphonso, King of Castile, the eighth of that name, and niece to King John by his sister Elinor."

In the play John gives a very liberal dowry to the Princess Blanche, whom by a poetical licence he brings into France. She was, in fact, in her own country when betrothed, and the queen-mother went to fetch her.

"*K. John*. Then do I give Volquessen, Touraine, Maine,
Poictiers, and Anjou, these five provinces,
With her to thee; and this addition more,
Full thirty thousand marks of English coin."†

Both kings were aware that this arrangement would not be acceptable to Constance.

* Hol. 278. Anno 1199. † Act ii. Sc 2.

"*K. Philip.* And, by my faith, this league that we have made
Will give her sadness very little cure.
Brother of England, how may we content
This widow lady? In her right we came:
Which we, God knows, have turn'd another way,
To our own vantage.

"*K. John.* We will heal up all,
For we'll create young Arthur Duke of Bretagne
And Earl of Richmond; and this rich fair town
We make him lord of."

This representation of the marriage settlements is not borne out by history; John did not give up the five provinces, but only "the city of Evreux, and some other towns, being those (according to Holinshed) which the King of France had taken from him in the war. The King of England likewise did homage to the French King for Brittany, and again received homage for the same country, and for the county of Richmond, of his nephew Arthur."* Holinshed says that this peace was displeasing to many. and especially to the Earl of Flanders;† but says nothing of any protest on the part of Arthur or Constance. I need not say that

* Hol. p. 279; Hoveden, p. 814. Daru (i. 406), notices the treaty as an abandonment of Arthur and Constance, but he does not represent its terms differently.

† He had been an ally of John, who now agreed that he should hold of the King of France.

the grief and indignation of Constance furnish some of Shakspeare's finest scenes. Arthur he represents as endeavouring to pacify his mother:—

"*Arth.* I do beseech you, madam, be content."

The young prince, however, as we shall afterwards hear, was not by any means of the unambitious disposition which would be inferred from this attempt to moderate the anger of his mother.

From this time the confusion of facts and dates is almost insurmountable. But I would here observe, that no ancient chronicle, or modern writer, is entirely to be depended upon. What we call the Chronicles (such as Holinshed's) were, for the most part, written long after the events related, and are less to be depended upon than even modern historians. And the same remark applies to the more ancient histories not contemporaneous with the events—as, in the present case, that of Matthew Paris; though it may perhaps be averred that such histories are founded upon contemporary annals kept in the monasteries. Contemporary historians we have for only a part of King John's time.*

Immediately after the conclusion of these preliminaries of peace and marriage contract, Shakspeare brings Pandulph, the Pope's legate, reproving John for refusing to admit Stephen Langton as

* See Lingard, iii. 10.

Archbishop of Canterbury. Now, the election of Langton did not take place till five years afterwards, and the interdict and excommunication were still later.

However, Shakspeare is correct in making John stand out stoutly against the Pope, and assert boldly his independence. He contended, in fact, for *domestic nomination*; and told the Pope plainly, as we learn from monkish authority—

"that he would not admit a man who had been brought up in France among his enemies; he reminded the Pope of the value of England to the papal see as a fruitful source of revenue, and declared that, as there was an abundance of learned men within his dominions, he would not go to any foreigner for justice or judgment."*

This was going very far in rebellion against the head of the Roman Catholic church. It is possible that Shakspeare, in the speech which he has put into John's mouth, had in his mind the king's supremacy, asserted afterwards more effectually by Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth:—

"*King John.* What earthly name to interrogatories
Can task the free breath of a sacred king?
Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name
So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous,
To charge me as an answer to the pope.

* Matt. Par., 224; anno 1207.

Tell him this tale; and from the mouth of England
Add thus much more—that no Italian priest
Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;
But as we, under heaven, are supreme head,
So, under him, that great supremacy,
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,
Without the assistance of a mortal hand:
So tell the pope; all reverence set apart
To him, and his usurp'd authority."*

But Shakspeare paraphrased a passage in the old play:—

"*K. John.* And what hast thou, or the pope thy master, to do to demand of me how I employ mine own? Know, sir priest, as I honour the church and holy churchmen, so I scorn to be subject to the greatest prelate in the world. Tell thy master so from me, and say that John of England said it, that never an Italian priest of them all shall either have tythe, toll, or polling-penny out of England; but, as I am king, so *I will reign, next under God, supreme head both over spiritual and temporal;* and he that contradicts me in this, I'll make him hop headless."†

The play now makes Pandulph occasion a renewal of the war, by exciting Philip to turn against John as an enemy to the church, and excommunicated by the authority of the Pope. But, according to the histories, Philip had, in 1202, espoused

* Act iii. Sc. 1. † Six Old Plays, i. 249.

Arthur's claim to John's possessions "on that side the sea,"* had married Arthur to his daughter Mary,† recommenced the war, notwithstanding the treaty of the preceding year and a renewal of friendship at Paris, where John had visited him by invitation. Hugh le Brun, Earl of March, a disappointed suitor of Isabel of Angoulême (John's new queen),

"being now desirous to procure some trouble also unto King John, joined himself with Arthur Duke of Britain, and found means to cause them of Poitou (a people ever subject to rebellion) to revolt from King John, and to take armour against him; so that the young Arthur, being encouraged with this new supply of associates, relying upon the discontents of the English barons,‡ first went into Touraine, and after into Anjou, compelling both those countries to submit themselves unto him, and proclaimed himself earl of those places by commission and grant of King Philip."

Yet we are told that this young prince, whom Mr. Schlegel, with poetical licence, styles *the amiable Arthur*,§ did not make himself more acceptable than his uncle himself to the people whom he desired as his subjects. Queen Elinor, the regent, got into Mirabeau, in Anjou, which was besieged by Arthur, and, according to some, she was taken

* Hol. 284. † Sismondi, vi. 211. ‡ Ibid. vi. 207.
§ iii. 102.

there. But John displayed the activity of which he boasted when he said, "*Whatever the King of France may take I will recover in one day.*"* He attacked Arthur, took him prisoner, and confined him at Falais. Here, according to our histories,

"King John caused his nephew to be brought before him, and there went about to persuade him all that he could to forsake his friendship and alliance with the French King, and to lean and stick to him, being his natural uncle. But Arthur, like one that wanted good counsel, and abounding too much in his own wilful opinion, made a presumptuous answer, not only denying so to do, but also commanding King John to restore under him the realm of England with all those other lands and possessions which King Richard had in his hand at the time of his death."

The King hereupon confined him closely, and a rumour of his death was spread through France. The Breton and Poictevin lords in vain solicited his liberty; and

"it was now reported that King John, *through persuasion of his counsellors*, appointed certain persons to go into Falais, where Arthur was kept in prison under the charge of Hubert de Burgh, and there to put out the young gentleman's eyes."

I continue the quotation, because it is the foun-

* Matt. Paris 208.

dation of one of the most beautiful of Shakspeare's scenes :—

"But through such resistance as he made against one of the tormentors that came to execute the King's commandment (for the other rather forsook their prince and country than they would consent to obey the King's authority herein), and *such lamentable words as he uttered,* Hubert de Burgh did preserve him from that injury, not doubting but rather to have thanks than displeasure at the King's hands, for delivering him of such infamy as would have redounded to his highness if the young gentleman had been so cruelly dealt withal. For *he considered that King John had resolved upon this point only in his heat and fury* (which moveth men to undertake many an inconvenient enterprise, unbeseeming the person of a common man, much more reproachful to a prince, all men in that mood being more foolish and furious, and prone to accomplish the perverse conceits of their ill-possessed hearts), *and that afterwards, upon better advisement, he would both repent himself so to have commanded and give them small thank that would see it put in execution.* Howbeit, to satisfy his mind for the time, and to stay the rage of the Bretons, he caused it to be bruited through the country that the King's commandment was fulfilled, and that Arthur also, through sorrow and grief, was departed out of this life. For the space of fifteen days *this rumour ran incessantly through both the realms of England and France,* and there was ringing for him through towns and villages as it had

been for his funeral. It was also bruited that his body was buried in the monastery of St. Andrews of the Cisteaux order. But when the Bretons were nothing pacified, but rather kindled more vehemently to work all the mischief they could devise, in revenge of their sovereign's death, there was no remedy but to signify abroad again that Arthur was as yet living and in health."

Upon a few expressions of this Chronicle Shakspeare has built the first scene of his fourth act, in which Arthur dissuades Hubert from putting out his eyes. The prince was now about fifteen years old—an age at which we generally cease to speak of a "pretty child" and his "innocent prate." Shakspeare has done quite right, for dramatic interest, in giving this character to the prince and his talk; but it is not quite consistent with that in which he appears in the late revolt.

The fine scene* between John and Hubert, in which Hubert undertakes that Arthur shall be put to death, is a creation of the poet, and one for which we are infinitely indebted to him. But surely there is an inconsistency between this scene and that (which is taken from the Chronicles) in which Hubert, without any indication of an intention to murder the prince, proceeds to put out his eyes. For *this* he had, according to Shakspeare, a written authority, (which the old play gives at

* Act iii. Sc. 3.

length,) yet, in the subsequent interview with the King, he is made to produce a warrant *for the murder.*

The scene* in which the King reproaches his minister for complying too readily with his commands, was apparently suggested by the passage which I have quoted from Holinshed; and this is perhaps the only passage which leads me to believe that Shakspeare did not *entirely* rely upon the old play. That piece describes John as repenting vehemently; but there is nothing upon which these fine touches of Shakspeare can have been founded.

"*King John.* It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves that take *their humours* for a warrant
To break within the bloody house of life;
And, on the winking of authority,
To understand a law; to know the meaning
Of dangerous majesty, *when perchance it frowns*
More upon humour than advised respect."

What follows is full of poetry and dramatic art; where John imputes his own crime to the suggestion of Hubert's "abhorred aspect," and his too ready acquiescence in what was only darkly hinted.

"*King John.* Hadst thou but shook thy head, or made
a pause,
When I spake darkly what I purposed,
Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face,

* Act iv. Sc. 2.

And bid me tell my tale in express words,
Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,
And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me;
But thou didst understand me by my signs,
And didst in signs again parley with sin:
Yea, without stop, did let thy heart consent,
And, consequently, thy rude hand to act
The deed which both our tongues held vile to name."

Warburton and Malone* consider Shakspeare as paying his court to Elizabeth by a covert attempt to throw upon poor Secretary Davison the death of Mary Queen of Scots.

As Holinshed affords a sufficient foundation for both these fine passages, it is doubtless unnecessary to have recourse to any courtier-like or political motive in the poet. But from the unbounded love of flattery and personal attention which characterized our celebrated Queen, I attribute much probability to this opinion of the critics.

The circulation of the report of Arthur's death, and the contradiction of it, are taken from the Chronicle; as is also the Prince's loss of life in an attempt to escape, though this is only stated doubtfully as one of many rumours.† Other reports made John the murderer of his nephew with his own hand. Considering how essential to the plot is John's cruel treatment of Arthur, I am surprised

* Bosw. 327. † Hol. 286. See Lingard, iii. 8.

that Shakspeare did not rather adopt one of these. He has, however, followed the old play. I do not offer any decided opinion upon the manner of Arthur's death.*

I do not find that about the time of the battle of Mirabeau (August 1202), the French fleet suffered any damage to justify the commencement of the fourth scene of this act—

"*King Phil.* So by a roaring tempest on the flood,
A whole armada of convicted sail
Is scatter'd and disjoined from fellowship."

The remainder of this scene is occupied with the grief of Constance for the capture of her son. The

* I know not what to infer from the following, which I take from Mr. T. Hardy's Patent Rolls, p. 36:—"The King to Alan Fitz Court and others, and to all those whom they wish to bring with them. Know ye that Furmie, servant of Arthur our nephew, came to us and told us on your part, that you were desirous of speaking with us, provided ye could easily obtain secure and safe conduct to come to us. We therefore inform you that we have granted unto you, and unto all those who may accompany you, safe and secure conduct, in coming to us and in returning, for eight days from Sunday next after the feast of St. Bartholomew; and in testimony hereof, &c. Inform us, however, of the day and place when and where you wish to come, and we will send letters of safe conduct to you thither. *We command you, however, that you do naught whereby evil may befal our nephew Arthur.* Witness ourself at Chinon, this 24th day of August [1202."]—Mackintosh apparently believed John to be the murderer.—See his Hist. i. 200.

hint upon which Shakspeare has wrought one of the finest scenes in the acted play was afforded by some very bad lines in the old play. I should be well contented to believe that the Princess answered to the Pope's legate, when attempting to console her—

"He talks to me who never had a son!"

But I am afraid that the balance of testimony goes to show that Constance, whom the play keeps alive until the year in which John submitted to the Pope,* did in fact die *before* the battle of Mirabeau: all French historians† place her death in 1201; whereas this battle was not fought till the summer of 1202; and I can find no authority for Holinshed's‡ statement, that Philip cited John *to answer such charges as* CONSTANCE *should bring against him.* Malone§ corrects Shakspeare, who lets Constance style herself *a widow*, and says that she was, *at this time*, married to her third husband. There certainly was a period in which she was *husbandless*, but the dates are far beyond correc-

* Act iv. Sc. 2.

† L'Art de vérifier les Dates, i. 900 (fol.) Daru, Hist. de Bretagne, i. 407.—Sismondi, vi. 211. Elinor died in 1203.

‡ P. 287.—See Sismondi, vi. 209-219. The only well supported summons was for robbing Hugh le Brun of his wife.

§ Bosw. 260.

tion. The third husband, when a widower, allied himself with the supposed murderer of his step-son.*

I do not find that any of the *English* lords interfered, as in the play, on behalf of Arthur. One sentence in the passage quoted from Holinshed, in which he speaks of the prince's death in England, as well as France, is the only authority for the interest excited *in England*, of which Shakspeare has drawn a picturesque description :—

" *Hub.* Old men and beldams in the streets
Do prophesy upon it dangerously;
Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths,
And when they talk of him they shake their heads,
And whisper one another in the ear;
And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,
Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.
I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,
The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,
With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news,
Who with his shears and measure in his hand,
Standing on slippers (which his nimble haste
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,)
Told of a many thousand warlike French
That were embattled and rank'd in Kent;
Another lean, unwash'd artificer
Cuts off his tale and talks of Arthur's death."†

* Daru, i. 442; Hol. 294. † Act iv. Sc. 2.

In the passage of Matthew Paris, from which Holinshed takes his statement, the rumour is said to prevail only *per totum regnum Francorum* and *per partes transmarinas.**

Nor can I trace to any authority, not even to the old play, the objection made by the peers to a repetition of the ceremony of the coronation.† However, it has given Shakspeare an opportunity of writing lines which are still quoted, sometimes, perhaps, not more appropriately than when applied to the coronation :—

> " To be possess'd with double pomp,
> To guard a title that was rich before,
> To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
> To throw a perfume on the violet,
> To smooth the ice, or add another hue
> Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
> To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
> Is wasteful and ridiculous excess."

These words are put into the mouth of William Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, natural son of

* Page 208.

† Steevens says that the coronation mentioned in Act iv. Sc. 2, was the fourth in this reign. It was probably the ceremony mentioned in Holinshed (p. 285) as taking place at Canterbury, on the 14th of April, 1202. The king and queen had each been crowned separately, and they both "sat crowned" when entertained by the Archbishop of York; but I think that this was only the third coronation, and of John the second only.—See Höl. 275, 280, 282, 285.

Henry the Second by the fair Rosamond;* and this nobleman is always included by Shakspeare among the discontented peers, but the Chronicles† mention him as faithful to his half-brother, until the eve of the arrival of Lewis in England.

The Earl of Pembroke,‡ who is coupled with Salisbury in this opposition to the King, appears also, at least up to the period of Magna Charta, on the side of John.§ Hubert de Burgh is correctly assigned by the poet to the King's side. Holinshed calls him "a right valiant man of war, as was anywhere to be seen,"‖ but he was not yet ennobled; and Shakspeare is perhaps right in representing him as hated by the nobles, and treated as an upstart. He makes him say, when charged by Salisbury with the murder,

> "By Heaven, I think my sword's as sharp as yours.
> I would not have you, lord, forget yourself,
> Lest I, by marking of your rage, forget
> Your worth, your greatness, and nobility."

* He married the daughter of William d'Evreux, Earl of Salisbury, and was created Earl by John. The family was soon extinct in the male line. I do not know whether there is any representative through females.—Banks' Ext. Peerage, iii. 645 and 440.

† Hol. 304.

‡ William Marshall, mentioned before as Earl of Striguill.

§ Hol. 321. ‖ P. 293.

The dignity of the peerage is asserted by Bigot.

" Out, *dunghill!* darest thou brave a nobleman?
Hub. Not for my life, but yet I dare defend
My innocent life against an emperor."

We now regard Hubert de Burgh as the very essence of nobility; but, although at a later period of his life he was an eminent member of the aristocracy, he was, I believe, the artificer of his own fortune,* and had not at this time attained the dignity of the peerage, though he had held important offices under the King.

The nobleman who is thus made to reproach Hubert de Burgh with his base descent is Roger Bigot, Earl of Norfolk,† who certainly was one of the barons who opposed King John.

If Shakspeare took from the old play the solicitations of the nobles in behalf of Arthur, he has varied its language in a way not unworthy of ob-

* According to Dugdale (Bar. i. 693) he was nephew to William FitzAdelm, a favourite and servant of Henry the Second, and ancestor to the Earls of Clanricarde. He was himself created Earl of Kent by Henry the Third, in the 13th year of his reign; and in that reign, though sometimes in much favour with the king, he was repeatedly charged, both by king and nobles, with crimes of all sorts, political and personal. These occurrences may have been the original foundation for the jealousy and contempt of Hubert, which the play ascribes to the peers.

† His ancestor came in with the Conqueror, and his father was made Earl by Henry the First.

servation. In the former play Essex* thus addresses the King:—

> " We crave, my lord, *to please the Commons with,*
> The liberty of Lady Constance' son."

Pembroke, whom our poet makes the spokesman, presses the request on the part of himself and his compeers; but, although he refers to " the murmuring lips of discontent," he does not obtrude upon the ears of royalty the plebeian description of the people at large.

Though Shakspeare appears to have incorrectly dated the disaffection of some of the barons, it is true that at this time discontents prevailed among them. The peers were summoned to attend the King at Portsmouth, in order to a fresh expedition into France; but, meeting at Leicester, they resolved that they would not go with him beyond sea, *unless he would restore to them their rights.*†

It is remarkable that Shakspeare assigns no cause for the revolt of the barons, excepting that for which he had the least authority, the imprisonment and death of Arthur, whom the poet assumes to have been the rightful heir to the crown. Historians mention his profligacy, effeminacy, neglect of business, and pecuniary exactions. To these no

* Geffry FitzPeter, Earl of Essex. Shakspeare only brings him forward once, in his character of chief justiciary.

† Hov. p. 818.

allusion is made by Shakspeare, otherwise than in the following speech of Faulconbridge :—

> " How I have sped among the clergymen,*
> The sum I have collected shall express.
> But, as I travelled hither through the land,
> I find the people strangely fantasied,
> Possess'd with rumours, full of idle dreams,
> Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear."

Of his exactions from the church, Faulconbridge here speaks boastfully. The complaints of the people, which we are taught to believe well founded,† he treats as " idle dreams."

I have already said, that all the events connected with Arthur and Constance occurred before the quarrel with the Pope about Stephen Langton, the excommunication of John, and the confederacy against him between his barons and the Dauphin.

Shakspeare places the first communication with Lewis immediately after the death of Arthur, involves Salisbury in it, and refers to a meeting of malcontents at St. Edmund's Bury. The next act he opens with the preparations of the King of France to invade England, in conspiracy with the

* The old play introduces Philip Faulconbridge compelling the friars to produce their hidden stores; and it is otherwise more full in enumerating the offences of the king.

† Hol. 287, 317—19, 328.—Matt. Par. 208, 209. See Hume, ii. 78.

discontented barons, and John's surrender of his crown to the Pope, which did not occur until 1213, more than ten years after the death of Arthur.

Shakspeare commences the act with the legate's *restoration* of the crown, which he is said to have retained in his hands for five days; but he makes no use of the speech published in the Chronicle, as "The saucy speech of Cardinal Pandulph, the Pope's lewd legate, to King John, in the presumptuous Pope's behalf."* The plot now makes a start, from the reconciliation of John with the Pope, to the landing of Lewis the Dauphin in England, of which he claimed the crown in right of his wife, the daughter of John's sister. I would here observe, that, if Shakspeare intended to represent the barons as the protectors of the hereditary succession to the crown, interrupted only by the forfeiture of John, he and they passed over fair Elinor, "the damsel of Bretagne," who succeeded to all the rights of her brother Arthur, and was kept in prison by John, without remonstrance, so far as I know, from English or Bretons.† Lewis landed in 1216. In the interval, the foreign‡ and civil wars

* Hol. 306.

† Of her Breton succession she was deprived by her step-father, who preferred his own daughter by Constance.

‡ The principal occurrence was the battle of Bouvines, in 1214, wherein John and his allies were defeated.—See Lingard, iii. 40.

had raged with varied success; but *one* event had happened, of which, although it is that by which we now chiefly remember King John, Shakspeare takes no notice whatever. This event is no other than the signature of MAGNA CHARTA.

How shall we account for Shakspeare's omission of an incident so essential in "the life and reign of King John," and so good for stage effect? It had occurred to me, especially when considering the omission of all reference to popular topics, that, as Shakspeare was a decided courtier, he might not wish to remind Queen Elizabeth, *who set Magna Charta at nought, in its most interesting particular*, of the solemn undertakings of her ancestors. But perhaps the omission of it in the old play is sufficient.

I suspect that for some ages before the commencement, in the reign of James the First, of the great struggle between the crown and the people, Magna Charta was not much thought of among Englishmen. Even by those who may be deemed constitutional writers, no stress was laid upon it; at least I do not find it in Fortescue, nor does Sir Thomas Smith advert to it in his Popular View of the English Commonwealth. By Holinshed it is mentioned,* but not as of great or permanent interest to Englishmen, or in a way to attract the particular attention of the

* P. 321.

poet. In our days, it is prominent even among English histories intended for the nursery; and I well remember that, when an attempt was made to versify and set to music the multiplication-table, and other rudiments of education,

> " Magna Charta we gain'd from John,
> Which Harry the Third put his seal upon,"

were two lines of "the Chapter of Kings." Surely, upon Coleridge's principle, Magna Charta ought to have been the prominent feature of the play.*

In the remainder of the play the history is pretty closely followed, except as to persons and places. Edmundsbury, I believe, is an interpolation by the editors, on the authority of the old play; that town is not mentioned in the Chronicles. It does not appear *where* Shakspeare meant to place the engagements to which he refers; nor, indeed, are the histories at all precise.

The death and confessions of Count Melun are mentioned by Holinshed;† as is also the story of John's death being occasioned by poison, administered by a monk of Swinestead Abbey in Lincolnshire. I find nothing of the loss of a French flotilla on Goodwin Sands,‡ but the loss of a part of John's

* As to John's conduct after signing the charter, I would refer the historian to Hardy's Patent Rolls, pp. 71 and 106.

† P. 334, from Matt. Paris.

‡ See Act v. Sc. 5. and 6.

army in the washes of Lincolnshire is warranted by the Chronicles. Not so the operations of Hubert in that part of the country; his service consisted in a gallant and successful defence of Dover.

The last scene of the play brings the revolted lords again to the King; it is said, and indeed is quite natural, that Melun's information made them think seriously of returning to their allegiance; but John's death came upon them too suddenly.

Of this play, Dr. Johnson says—

"The tragedy of King John, though not written with the utmost power of Shakspeare, is varied with a very pleasing interchange of incidents and characters. The lady's grief is very affecting, and the character of the bastard contains that mixture of greatness and levity which this author delighted to exhibit."

The lamentations of Constance, when represented by a powerful actress, form a very attractive part of this play; but her language is not uniformly admirable: and, surely, the scenes between John and Hubert are those which, coldly read in the closet, are the most striking of all. And I must do Johnson the justice to say, that, though he omits it in his recapitulation, he has commended the second of these conferences as exhibiting "many touches of nature."* And this is the better of the

* Act iv. Sc. 2.

two—the former being somewhat disfigured by conceits and obscurities.

The character of Constance, though founded upon reality, is not the less poetical. Mrs. Jameson* is a little too enthusiastic about the historical princess; but her highly-wrought notice of Shakspeare's Constance is exceedingly attractive. Notwithstanding the command to put Arthur to death, the character of John is not brought out by the dramatist in the singularly odious light in which all modern historians have taught us to view it; still there is nothing inconsistent either with nature or with history. Possibly, a tradition from the revolting barons, and the writings of ecclesiastics, who have the great advantage of recording the deeds of their enemy, may have exaggerated the faults of this unfortunate king.

The merits of this play consist chiefly in the scenes, as distinguished from the plot, and the discrimination of character. In some of these scenes there is admirable force and beauty; and I should indeed be sorry that the doubts which I have raised of their historical accuracy should lessen the pleasure of any one in reading them.

* Characteristics of Women, ii. 238.

RICHARD II.

Between John and Richard the Second four reigns intervened, occupying a period of an hundred and seventy years, which might have furnished to Shakspeare some interesting dramatic incidents. But he probably chose John, not so much for the peculiar interest afforded by the transactions of his reign—for, in truth, we have seen that he omitted the *most* interesting—but because he found a plot ready to his hand in the old play. The opinion of the Schlegels, that, in the series of plays beginning with Richard the Second and ending with Richard the Third, the poet intended to teach history on the stage, is hardly consistent with the order in which the plays were written, differing as it does from the order of the reigns described.*

* According to Malone, the historical plays were written in the following order:—"Henry the Sixth," "Richard the Second," "Richard the Third," "Henry the Fourth," "Henry the Fifth," "Henry the Eighth," John is not in the list, but must have been contemporaneous with the first part of "Henry the Fourth."

The play of "Richard the Second," like the former, professes to represent "the life and death of the king" whose name it bears; but, in this instance, the action does not begin until the twentieth of the twenty-two years which the reign occupied. Mr. Payne Collier has lately discovered that a play representing the earlier history of Richard the Second, and especially the vagaries and death of Jack Straw, was performed at Shakspeare's theatre in the year 1611.* Mr. Collier thinks that this play was certainly not the work of Shakspeare; but my friend Mr. Amyot, whose letter Mr. Collier publishes, conceives that the play exhibited in 1611 "was only a first part of Shakspeare's play, and might not improbably have been written by Shakspeare himself."

A question more interesting to us is, whether it was *our* play of "Richard the Second," the causing of which to be enacted was an article in the indictment against Sir Gilly Meyrick, in 1600.

As I have no facts to add to those which are given in the notes of Malone and others,† I will only quote a speech of the Attorney-General *Bacon*, from the latest edition of "The State Trials:"—

* New Particulars regarding the Works of Shakspeare, 1836, p. 9.

† Bosw., ii. 324, xvi. 3.

"And the story of Henry the Fourth being set forth in a play, and in that play there being set forth the killing of the king upon a stage, the Friday before, Sir Gilly and some others of the Earl's train (of Essex) having the humour to see a play, they must needs have the play of 'Henry the Fourth.' The players told them that was stale, they should get nothing by playing of that; but no play else would serve, and Sir Gilly gives forty shillings to Phillips, the player, to play this, besides whatever he could get."* "So earnest was he," it is added in Bacon's account of these proceedings, "to satisfy his eyes with the sight of this tragedy, which he thought soon after his lordship should bring from the stage to the state, but that God turned it upon their own heads."†

Assuredly the killing of the king is exhibited in Shakspeare's "Richard the Second;" but it has been observed that this could hardly be the play to which so much objection was made by the crown lawyers of Elizabeth, seeing that "there are expressions in it which strongly inculcate the doctrine of indefeasible right." ‡

This objection will be better appreciated as we go through the play.

It commences with the accusation of Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, § by Henry (surnamed Boling-

* St. Tr. i. 1445, 43. Eliz. † Montagu's Bacon, vi. 363, 4.
‡ Farmer, in Bosw., xvi. 4.
§ Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham and Duke of

broke) * Earl of Derby and Duke of Hereford, eldest son of John of Gaunt. After a great deal of

"Woman's war
And bitter clamour of two eager tongues."

the accusation is set forth thus:—

"*Boling*. Look, what I speak my life shall prove it true;
That Mowbray hath received eight thousand nobles,
In name of lendings for your highness' soldiers,
The which he hath detained for lewd employments,
Like a false traitor and injurious villaine.
Besides I say, and will in battle prove,
Or here, or elsewhere, to the farthest verge
That ever was survey'd by English eye,
That all these treasons, for these eighteen years,
Complotted and contrived in this land,
Fetch from false Mowbray their first head and spring.
Further I say, and further will maintain,
Upon his bad life to make all this good,
That he did plot the Duke of Gloucester's death,
Suggest his soon-believing adversaries,
And consequently, like a traitor coward,
Sluiced out his innocent soul through streams of blood."†

Norfolk; so created as the grandson of Thomas Brotherton, Duke of Norfolk. The Howards are descended from one of his daughters.

* It is doubted whether he had this appellation at this time.—Bosw., 9.

† Act i. Sc. 1.

In this accusation (though not in its terms), and in the meeting at Coventry for the purpose of the combat, the stay of proceedings by the King, and the banishment of the two dukes, Shakspeare adheres closely to Holinshed;* but neither the poet nor the chronicler conveys a notion of the nature of the transaction between these two nobles, or the interest which the King had in it, as it is recorded, not only in ancient histories, but in the Records of Parliament.

Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester,† one of the King's paternal uncles, had taken an active part in the accusation and punishment of those ministers and favourites of Richard, who had rendered themselves obnoxious, not only to the peers but to the commons, which latter had now begun to express their opinion and exert their power. Gloucester and the Earl of Arundel‡ had been mainly instrumental in the appointment of a parliamentary commission, which, in the year 1386, virtually—nay, avowedly—superseded the king, now twenty years of age, in the government.§ The duke had been one of the lords who preferred an

* ii. 844.

† Sixth son of Edward the Third.

‡ Richard Fitz Alan, sixth Earl. Mowbray married his daughter. The present Duke of Norfolk is the representative of both in the female line.

§ Lingard, iv. 208.

"appeal of treason" against De la Pole, Earl of Suffolk,* the Chancellor, and others. In these proceedings, and in an affray which occurred at Radcot-bridge, when the Duke of Ireland,† one of the King's favourites, was driven into the Thames, the Earl of Derby (Bolingbroke) and the Earl of Nottingham (Mowbray) took an active part. In 1389 Richard recovered his authority, but some years elapsed before he wreaked his vengeance upon Gloucester. In 1398 several noblemen preferred, in their turn, an "appeal of treason" against Gloucester, Arundel, and others, on account of their former proceedings against Richard's authority. But before Gloucester, who had been arrested and sent to Calais, could be brought to answer to the charge in Parliament, he died at that place, under circumstances which are still in obscurity. Holinshed says that upon the report of a judge, who had been sent to examine him, that he had confessed treason, the King sent the Earl Marshal, Mowbray, to make away with him secretly.‡

* This Michael De la Pole had risen to some eminence in the preceding reign, and was created Earl of Suffolk in the ninth year of this reign. He fled and was outlawed in the twelfth year.

† Robert de Vere, ninth Earl of Oxford, created Marquis of Dublin and Duke of Ireland by this king, whose favourite he was.

‡ Hol. 837. See Lingard, 242; and Turner, ii. 305, from Froissart and others.

Shakspeare, by the mouths of Lancaster and York, plainly, but in ultra-loyal language, imputes the murder to King Richard.

"*Gaunt.* Heaven's is the quarrel; for Heaven's substitute,
His deputy anointed in his sight,
Hath caused his death: *the which, if wrongfully,*
Let heaven revenge; for I may never lift
An angry arm against his minister."

And—

"*York.* Not Gloster's death
Hath ever made me sour my patient cheek,
Or bend one wrinkle on my sovereign's face."*

It is probable that Richard was always suspected of the murder, as Bolingbroke made it an article of charge against him at his deposition; but the inquiry afterwards instituted in Parliament, under the House of Lancaster, is not to be depended upon.

The Parliament met in 1398 at Shrewsbury, and Hereford obtained for himself a full pardon for all past offences, and then preferred a charge of treason against Norfolk. It is not clear whether he made the charge in enmity against Norfolk, or whether he was required to make it in consequence of reports which had reached the King. His own previous pardon gives him the appearance of turning "King's evidence." †

* Act ii. Sc. 1.

† See Lingard, iv. 248.

The charge was founded upon an averment that Mowbray and Bolingbroke (now created Dukes of Norfolk and Hereford) having accidentally met, the former openly communicated to the latter his suspicion that the king, notwithstanding that he had publicly absolved them, would revenge himself upon them for "the matter of Radcot-bridge,"* and, with the help of Surry, Wiltshire, and others, would effect the destruction of both of them. This intimation was accompanied by expressions of entire distrust of the king's good faith. The charge was referred to a parliamentary committee, which awarded a trial by combat: this, however, was prevented (as in the play) by the banishment of the accuser for six years, and of the accused for life. "Of the political mysteries," says Hallam,† "which this reign affords, none is more inexplicable than the quarrel of these peers." So far from being accused of the murder of Gloucester, the offence of Mowbray consisted in confessing his fear of the perfidious vengeance of the king for his co-operation with that duke.

The readers of Shakspeare have generally remarked upon the inequality of the sentences; but the difference made was not without reason. Norfolk, it appears, had acknowledged his guilt, or, at least, what was in those days taken as guilt, in

* Parl. Hist., 236. † Middle ages, ii. 118.

certain particulars, and might, therefore, be justly punished. It is more difficult to say why Bolingbroke was punished at all,* more especially after he had been pardoned in full Parliament. The reason assigned, "to avoid troubles and quarrels between the two dukes and their friends," does not appear to justify the banishment of both. From the injunction, that when in exile they should not meet, it may, perhaps, be inferred that the whole sentence was really the execution of that vengeance which Mowbray had apprehended in his ill-fated conversation with Bolingbroke. And in this view we may understand the charge, apparently unnecessary when given to two mortal enemies:

"You never shall (so help you truth and heaven!)
Embrace each other's love in banishment."†

The real apprehension was, lest these ancient conspirators should

"——— by advised purpose meet,
To plot, contrive, or complot any ill
'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land."

There is Holinshed's‡ authority for describing

* It was subsequently one of the charges against Richard that he had banished Bolingbroke, although he had preferred the charge by the king's command, and was ready to prosecute it.—Art. xi. Parl. Hist., 258.

† Act. i. Sc. 3.

‡ P. 847; and see Lingard, 253. Walsingham (558) does not mention the council.

these sentences as the act of the council of which Gaunt himself was a member.

"*K. Rich.* Thy son is banish'd upon good advice,
Whereto thy tongue a party verdict gave,
Why at our justice seems'st thou, then, to lower?
Gaunt. Things sweet to taste prove in digestion sour.
You urg'd me as a judge; but I had rather
You would have bid me argue like a father:—
O! had it been a stranger, not my child,
To smooth his fault I should have been more mild:
A partial slander sought I to avoid,
And in the sentence my own life destroy'd.
Alas! I look'd when some of you should say,
I was too strict, to make mine own away;
But you gave leave to my unwilling tongue,
Against my will to do myself this wrong."

"The whole," says Coleridge,* "of this scene of the quarrel between Mowbray and Bolingbroke seems introduced for the purpose of showing by anticipation the characters of Richard and Bolingbroke." I venture to say, that it was introduced because the dramatist found it in the Chronicle, and that it does not illustrate the characters of king or peer. The difference between Mowbray's and Bolingbroke's reception of the sentence is natural, considering the difference of the punishment.

Shakspeare has Holinshed's authority for the

* Lit. Remains, ii. 269.

popularity of Bolingbroke, and the concourse of people by which he was accompanied to the coast:

"A wonder it was to see what number of people ran after him in every town and street where he came, before he took the sea, lamenting and bewailing his departure, as who would say that when he departed, the only shield, defence, and comfort of the commonwealth was ended and gone."*

He never loses an opportunity of displaying his contempt of the exhibition of popular favour, or the reception of it by its object.

"Ourself, and Bushy, Bagot here, and Green,
Observed his courtship to the common people:
How he did seem to dive into their hearts
With humble and familiar courtesy;
What reverence he did throw away on slaves;
Wooing poor craftsmen, with the craft of smiles,
And patient underbearing of his fortune,
As 'twere to banish their affects with him.
Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;
A brace of draymen bid—God speed him well,
And had the tribute of his supple knee,
With *Thanks my countrymen, my loving friends:*—
As were our England in reversion his,
And he our subjects' next degree in hope."†

I know not of any authority for the scene between John of Gaunt, on his death-bed, ‡ and his nephew;

* Hol. 848. † Act i. Sc. 4. ‡ Act ii. Sc. 1.

a scene into which, as is observed by the writer whom I have lately quoted,* the poet has introduced passages inculcating the love of our country:

"This royal throne of kings, this scept'red isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise;
This fortress built by Nature for herself,
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England."

But the scene assuredly falsifies a remark of the same critic, which is, in truth, quite gratuitous, that "Richard's attention to decorum, and high feeling of the kingly dignity, are never forgotten throughout the play!"

It is recorded (and this passage may justify the expressions we have quoted from the Gaunt and York of the play) that the Dukes of Lancaster and York—

"When they heard that their brother (Gloucester) was so suddenly made away, wist not what to say to the matter, and began both to be sorrowful for his death, and

* Coleridge, p. 165.

doubtful of their own states: for sith they saw how the king (abused by the counsel of evil men) abstained not from such an heinous act, they thought he would afterwards attempt greater *misorders* from time to time."* They assembled their servants and retainers, and repaired to London; but "these dukes (after their displeasure was somewhat assuaged) determined to cover the stings of their griefs for a time; and, if the King would amend his manners, to forget also the injuries past. At length, by the intercession and means of those noblemen that went to and fro between them, they were accorded, and the king promised from henceforth to do nothing but by the assent of the dukes; but he kept small promise in this behalf, as after will appear."

Shakspeare, therefore, is not justified in making Richard the open reviler of his uncle,† and in denying him even the pretence of an intention to amend.

In the line put into the mouth of Gaunt—

"Landlord of England art thou now, not King"—

* Hol. 838.

† In the account of this time, in Arch. xx. 43, it is said that the king's face, on one occasion, "grew pale with anger;" and Mr. Webb observes, that Shakspeare "has taken advantage of this peculiarity," where he makes Richard reproach Gaunt for "making pale his cheek." But I know not how Shakspeare became acquainted with the peculiarity, if it existed. Malone observes that "*Old* John of Gaunt, *time-honour'd* Lancaster," died at the age of 59. Bosw. 7.

the allusion is to "a common bruit, that the king had set to farm the realm of England unto Sir William Scroop, Earl of Wiltshire,* and then treasurer of England, Sir John Bushy, † Sir John Bagot, ‡ and Sir Henry Green, knights."

Whatever may have occured between the Duke of Lancaster and the king before the duke's death, Richard certainly seized his property, as Shakspeare relates, and the Duke of York retired to Langley, "rejoicing that nothing amiss happened in the commonwealth, through his device or consent."

"I'll not be by the while: my liege, farewell."

It is true, nevertheless, that Richard appointed York to be Regent during his absence in Ireland.

* So created in this reign. He was a younger son of the noble house of Scrope. See Arch. xx. 46.

† Speaker of the House of Commons.

‡ Hol. 849. This Bagot, I have no doubt, was one of the Bagots then and now of Blithfield, in Staffordshire. Collins (vii. 523) mentions a Ralph Bagot, who flourished in the time of Edward the Third, and Sir John Bagot, who was a Privy Counsellor to Henry the Fourth, and died in 1437. But the name of Richard's Bagot (though Holinshed sometimes calls him John) was certainly William, as a writ was directed to him, with Bushy and Green, by the Duke of York, as Regent, for the custody of Wallingford Castle, in which Queen Isabella then lay. July 12, 1399. Rymer, viii. 83. This William died about 1406. Arch. xx. 278.

Ross,* Willoughby,† and Northumberland,‡ are correctly placed among the malcontent peers. All these joined Bolingbroke when he landed; and Northumberland had been declared a traitor by Richard, and his estate confiscated, because he refused to join Richard in Ireland.§ Young Percy says that his uncle, Worcester, left the king,

"Because your lordship was proclaimed traitor."

The conversation of these noblemen describes the state of England, and the misgovernment of Richard, in language quite consistent with the Chronicles; but such as, in the case of King John, Shakspeare appears studiously to avoid. In both cases he freely charges the kings with murder, or intended murder; but in the former he cautiously abstains from characterizing those offences against the nobles and people which led to the combination against the royal authority. He now freely puts into the mouth of malcontent peers—

* This was probably William Lord Roos, of Hamlake, ancestor in the female line of the present Lord de Roos. Banks ii. 445.

† William Lord Willoughby, ancestor in the female line of the present Lord Willoughby of Eresby. Banks, ii. 593.

‡ Henry Lord Percy, first Earl of Northumberland of that name, ancestor in the female line of the Duke of Northumberland. Collins, ii. 253.

§ Turner, ii. 317; Collins, ii. 257.

"*Ross.* The commons hath he pill'd with grievous taxes,
And lost their hearts; the nobles hath he fined
For ancient quarrels, and quite lost their hearts.

"*Willoughby.* And daily new exactions are devised;
As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what.*

And Northumberland in plain terms excites his followers to resistance:—

"*North.* If then we shall shake off our slavish yoke,
Imp out our drooping country's broken wing,
Redeem from broking pawn the blemish'd crown,

* Act ii. Sc. 1. Hardyng, a contemporary, says (p. 347)—

"Great tax aye the king took through all the land,
For which commons him hated free and bold."

And Stow (p. 319), "he compelled all the religious gentlemen and commons to set their seals to *blanks*, to the end he might, as it pleased him, oppress them severally, or all at once." Richard had said in Act i. Sc. 4,

"Our substitutes at home shall have blank charters,
Whereto, when they shall know what men are rich,
They shall subscribe them for large sums of gold."

Some of the commons paid 1000 marks, some 1000*l.*, and see Hol. ii. 849. *Benevolences*, I suspect, acquired that name at a later period—voluntary contributions were so called in the time of Henry the Seventh; but Richard made many persons, who were under accusation on account of the former proceedings against his favourites (ancient quarrels), compound for pardon, and pay large sums *pro benevolentiâ suâ recuperandâ*. Turner, ii. 317. The taxes with which Richard is reproached were all imposed by Act of Parliament: but they nevertheless formed part of the charge against him. See Hume, iii. 41.

Wipe off the dust that hides our sceptre's gilt,
And make high majesty look like itself,
Away with me in post to Ravenspurg."

This difference between the two plays may be accounted for by the difference of the materials. Nothing is said in the old play of King John, and very little in Holinshed, of the King's offences; whereas those of Richard are repeatedly set forth. Still, I cannot help observing, though I know not how to account for it, that the dramatist here dwells upon popular grievances, which, in the other play he treats with contempt, though history has certainly handed down John as, not less than Richard, the oppressor of his people.

It is, however, true that Shakspeare has, even in this play, not only much of high-flown loyalty and assertion of the sacredness of the kingly character, but some expressions disrespectful to the commons; yet these latter are put into the mouths of the king's favourites,* and the ministers of his mal-administration, whom the poet apparently represents as not undeservedly punished.†

"*Bushy*. The wavering commons; for their love
Lies in their purses, and whoso empties them,
By so much fills their heart with deadly hate."

It does not appear in the play, but it is true,

* Act ii. Sc. 3. † Act iii. Sc. 1.

that the gentleman who thus treats "the hateful commons," was their Speaker.*

The Chronicle† is also followed in the march of Bolingbroke from Ravenspurg to Berkeley Castle, and in his interview with the Duke of York, who soon gave up the notion of opposing him. I suspect too, that York, who, according to our authority,‡ must have been in Bristol ¶ when it fell into the hands of Bolingbroke, did, in fact, negociate with the invader, and preserve a neutrality, but not without a struggle, well described by Shakspeare, between his loyalty and his disgust at the king's misgovernment.

"If I know
How, or which way, to order these affairs,
Thus thrust disorderly into my hands,
Never believe me. Both are my kinsmen;—
The one's my sovereign, whom both my oath
And duty bids defend; the other, again,
Is my kinsman, whom the king hath wrong'd,
Whom conscience and my kindred bids to right."§

* Parl. Hist. i. 221. Hol.

† Hol. 853. I know not on what authority.

‡ Lingard says that Sir Peter Courtenay, Governor of Bristol, gave it up to the Duke of York as Regent, but he gives no authority but Walsingham, who does not bear him out; nor do any of the Chronicles which I have searched. That Sir Peter was Governor of Calais appears in Rymer, viii. 83.

¶ Wals. 554.

§ Act ii. Sc. 2.

This is addressed to the queen; but Isabel was in truth now a child of eight or nine years old.*

We are told that York was more of sportsman than a politician.

"When all the lords to council and parliament
Went, he would to hunting and also to hawking."†

Shakspeare makes York a doubtful adherent of Henry, even at a later period.‡ I do not know whether there is any warrant for this, except in his original hesitation.

Johnson§ thinks that the next scene, between the Earl of Salisbury‖ and "a Captain," is out of its place. The scene has little interest, and the question is unimportant, but the transposition which the Doctor suggests would be more conformable to

* Bosw., 53. She is correctly placed with Bushy and Green, but her residence was not in the king's palace, but at Wallingford Castle. Another anachronism consists in mentioning now the death of the widowed Duchess of Gloucester, who died after the accession of Henry. Plashy was Gloucester's seat in Essex.

† Hardyng, p. 340. ‡ At Flint, in Act iii. Sc. 3.

§ Bosw. 86.

‖ John de Montacute, third Earl of that family. Collins says, but Sir Egerton Brydges denies, that the present Montagus are descended from his brother. If so, there must be a legal claim to the old earldom; but it was given to the Nevilles, descendants in the female line. Salisbury was certainly an adherent of Richard.

Holinshed. The withering of the bay-trees is in Holinshed, as commentators have observed.

I should scarcely mention this scene but for a line in it which I remember to have been quoted by Mr. Canning.

"*Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap,—*
The one in fear to lose what they enjoy,
The other to enjoy by rage and war."

Mr. Canning quoted, in the House of Commons,* the first of these lines, but he gave it thus—

"*Good* men look pale, while ruffians dance and leap;"

and, comparing the state of the country at two different periods, he asked,—"was not the ruffian now abashed, and did not the good man feel confident in his security?"

Mr. Canning made his quotation, as he often did, without recollecting where the passage was to be found; and employed me, the next morning, to search it out for him; a frequent and most agreeable diversion from my usual employment, which I remember with great delight. When he found that it was *property*, and not *virtue*, which had been put in jeopardy, he rejoiced that no Radical had taken advantage of his misquotation: but Radicals, perhaps, are not readers of Shakspeare.

* July 11, 1817. Canning's Speeches, iv. 24.

In the condemnation of the king's two favourites, Bushy and Green, the Chronicle* is followed; for if Shakspeare exercises upon them a summary jurisdiction, Holinshed reports that they were arraigned before the constable and marshal; a proceeding, I apprehend, which (even if it implied the exercise of martial law) was equally inconsistent with the ordinary forms of legal judgment.†

Shakspeare now introduces Richard at Barkloughly Castle in Wales, accompanied by the Bishop of Carlisle and the Duke of Aumerle:‡ here he is joined by Salisbury, who brings the mournful intelligence that the army which, on landing from Ireland, he had collected in Wales, had dispersed themselves, and some had even joined Bolingbroke, upon a false report of Richard's death.

This is all according to Holinshed,§ and it is

* Hol., 853.

† Walsingham says they were "*statim ad clamorem communium decapitati*," p. 38. Scroop, Earl of Wiltshire, is mentioned as beheaded with the other two; and Shakspeare afterwards alludes to him, as in the same predicament, though he has omitted him in this place.

‡ Eldest son of the Duke of York, Earl of Rutland and Duke of Albemarle.

§ And see in Arch. xx., 70, the French metrical history of the deposition of Ric. II., written by a contemporary, with the valuable notes of the Rev. John Webb; this may probably be deemed the best authority for the events of this time.

curious in this, as in other instances, to see how Shakspeare improves a hint, furnished by his prosaic predecessor. "*The King knew*," says Holinshed, "*his title, true, just, and infallible;* and his conscience clear, pure, and without spot of envy or malice." In a passage of much poetical merit our poet has these lines, which Dr. Johnson points out as expressing the doctrine of indefeasible right:—

" Discomfortable cousin! know'st thou not,
That when the searching eye of Heaven is hid
Behind the globe, and lights the lower world,
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen,
In murders and in outrage bloody here;
But when, from under this terrestrial ball,
He fires the proud tops of the Eastern pines,
And darts his light through every guilty hole,
Then murders, treasons, and detested sins,
The cloak of night being pluck'd from off their backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves?
So when this thief, this traitor Bolingbroke,—
Who all this while hath revell'd in the night,
Whilst we were wand'ring with the antipodes,—
Shall see us rising in our throne the East,
His treasons will sit blushing in his face,
Not able to endure the sight of day,
But self-affrighted, tremble at his sin.
Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king;

The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord."*

But when informed of the death of his favourites at Bristol, Richard lost all confidence, and gave the word in the play, as in the Chronicles,† to discharge his followers.

If we may rely upon the contemporary narrative, which is always favourable to Richard, the language of the King savoured much more of reliance upon the justice and mercy of God, than upon his own divine right as a king.

" Glorious and merciful God, who didst endure to be crucified for us, if by sin I have greatly transgressed against Thee, with folded hands I cry Thee mercy !..... O God of glory ! I humbly beseech Thee, that, as I have never consented, according to my ability, to bring evil upon any one who had not deserved it, be pleased to have mercy upon me, alas ! a poor king ; for I know right well that, unless Thou shouldst speedily deign to regard me, I am lost."‡

Bolingbroke is now placed before Flint Castle, accompanied by " York, Northumberland, and others." I cannot trace the Duke of York to Flint, but Northumberland was certainly with Bolingbroke.

Aumerle is assigned by Shakspeare (probably on

* Act iii. Sc. 2. † Hol., 855.
‡ Arch., 97, and Turner, ii. 325.

Holinshed's authority) to the side of Richard,* by whom he had been greatly favoured; but I am afraid that, whatever may have been the conduct of his father, the Duke of York, Aumerle had now joined Bolingbroke, with whom, according to our narrative, he had been, from the beginning, in treacherous communication.†

"The Earl of Rutland (Aumerle) at that time said nothing to the King, but kept at as great a distance as he could from him, just as though he had been ashamed to see himself in his presence."‡

As Holinshed also places Aumerle with Bolingbroke, I am at a loss to guess why Shakspeare makes him faithful to Richard.

The King's rebuke of Northumberland for not kneeling to him is also unaccountable, seeing that it is mentioned in the Chronicle that he and his colleagues "did their due reverence to the King on their knees."§

This occurred at Flint. Of the mission of the Dukes of Exeter‖ and Surry¶ from Richard to Henry, and of the treacherous means by which Northumberland brought Richard to Flint, matched, as historians tell us, by intentions equally trea-

* He says that he joined him at Conway.
† Arch., 55, 64. ‡ Arch., 158. § Hol., 857.
‖ John Holland, who married the king's sister.
¶ Thomas Holland, his brother.

cherous on the part of the king,* the poet takes no notice. Nor does Holinshed mention the *king's* intended breach of faith in respect of the amnesty. This is one of the instances in which a more minute knowledge of history might have furnished Shakspeare with some good scenes, and further discriminations of character. By placing the negociation with Northumberland at Flint, Shakspeare loses the opportunity of describing the disappointment of the king, when he found himself, on his progress to join Henry at Flint, a prisoner to Northumberland, who had concealed the force by which he was acccompanied.

The failure of Northumberland to pay the accustomed respect to the king is not an unimportant matter, because his undertaking that Bolingbroke would be contented with his own inheritance, as the son and heir of John of Gaunt, leaving the crown on the head of Richard, is a constituent part of the treachery. In the dialogue it is preserved; but not so the stipulations which Bolingbroke made through Northumberland, as to the punishment of the murderers of the Duke of Gloucester, and the redress of other grievances.

Holinshed is followed in describing Bolingbroke

* Hol., 856. The fullest account is in Turner, ii. 329-30, chiefly from the contemporary MS. Hardyng, a servant of the Percies (p. 351), represents Northumberland as himself deceived by Henry. See Arch., 240.

as still claiming, even now that the king was in his power, only that which of right belonged to him. Shakspeare chose this version of the story, rather than the more authentic narrative of Stow; from which, as well as from his authority, we learn that the duke, though he did not at once claim the crown, gave the king to understand that he should take a share in the government.

"Fair cousin of Lancaster," said Richard, "you be right welcome."

Then Duke Henry replied, bowing very low to the ground—

"My Lord, I am come sooner than you sent for me, the reason whereof I will tell you:—the common report of your people is such, that you have, for the space of twenty or two-and-twenty years, governed them very badly and very injuriously, and in so much that they are not well contented therewith. But if it please our Lord, *I will help you to govern them better than they have been governed in time past.*"

King Richard answered him—

"*Fair cousin, since it pleaseth you, it pleaseth us well.*"*

From the appearance of his enemies before Flint Castle, the king apparently gave himself up for lost; and Shakspeare is, therefore, justified in putting into his mouth the language of despair:—

* Arch., 167; and Stow, 322.

"——— must he lose
The name of king? o' God's name let it go!
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
My gorgeous palace for an hermitage,
My *gay apparel* for an alms-man's gown."

And much more in the same strain. The last mentioned sacrifice was severe, as this king was celebrated for the richness of his dress.* It was, perhaps, only upon passionate exclamations of this sort that his enemies founded their assertion, to which we shall come presently, of his having at this time promised to resign his crown.

A scene is now devoted to the Queen.† The conversation which she overhears between the gardener and his assistants is an invention of the poet, not unworthy of observation. The king's misgovernment and ruin are here attributed to the overgrown power of his favourites.

"*Gardener*. Go, bind thou up yon dangling apricocks,
Which, like unruly children, make their sire
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight:
Give some supportance to the bending twigs.—
Go thou, and, like an executioner,
Cut off the heads of too fast-growing sprays,
That look too lofty in the commonwealth:—
All must be even in our government."

* See Bosw., 112. † Act iii., Sc. 4.

Again :—

"He that hath suffer'd this disorder'd spring
Hath now himself met with the fall of leaf :
The weeds that his broad-spreading leaves did shelter,
That seem'd in eating him to hold him up,
Are pluck'd up, root and all, by Bolingbroke."

" . . . . Oh ! what pity is it,
That he had not so trimm'd and dress'd his land
As we this garden ! We at time of year
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees ;
Lest, being over-proud with sap and blood,
With too much riches it confound itself :
Had he done so to great and growing men,
They might have lived to bear, and he to taste,
Their fruits of duty. All superfluous branches
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live :
Had he done so, himself had borne the crown,
Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down."

The fourth act commences with the accusation of Aumerle in full parliament, by Bagot, for the murder of the Duke of Gloucester. Except in placing this occurrence before the deposition of Richard, the poet has here followed the Chronicle and the Records.*

He has followed them also with sufficient exactness in his account of the submission of Richard after his arrival in London, though I know not

* Hol., iii. 4; and Parl. Hist., i. 283.

why he makes Henry's assumption of the throne precede the resignation of the unfortunate king.

Holinshed gives the thirty-three articles,* in which Richard was charged with various acts of oppression and misgovernment, as well as with the injury done to the Duke of Lancaster.

"Divers of the king's servants, which by licence had access to his person, comforted him (being with sorrow almost consumed, and in manner half dead) in the best wise they could, to regard his health and save his life. And, first, they advised him willingly to suffer himself to be deposed, and to resign his right of his own accord, so that the Duke of Lancaster might, *without murder or battle*, obtain the sceptre and diadem; after which, they well perceived, *he gaped*, by means whereof they thought he might be in perfect assurance of his life long to continue."†

The Chronicler is uncertain whether this was friendly advice, or the result of Henry's subornation; but, after some time, being reminded of his supposed promise, Richard "answered *benignly*, and said that such promise he made, and so to do the same was at that hour in full purpose to perform and fulfil."

Shakspeare makes York and Northumberland the principal actors here. The former urges him

* For an analysis of these articles, with a very ingenious comment, very much in favour of Richard, see Hume, iii. 41.

† Hol., 861.

"To do that office of thine own good-will,
Which tired majesty did make thee offer,—
The resignation of thy state and crown
To Henry Bolingbroke."

As to York, he is probably wrong; but Northumberland was one of the commissioners to whom the resignation was made.

Richard appears to have been quite humbled and reduced to despair, so as to justify the picture of imbecility which Shakspeare has drawn; and, though we do not find him pressed, as in the play, to confess all the crimes enumerated in the charge, he was made to acknowledge, in the instrument of resignation, that he had been "insufficient and unable, and also unprofitable, and for his open deserts was not unworthy to be put down."*

Whatever may have been the recklessness of Richard's character while in prosperity, Shakspeare is borne out by his authorities in representing him as humble and submissive from the time in which he came within the power of his rival.

His humility, however, according to the report which one of his followers gives of his exclamations, did not amount to religious resignation. He thus addresses his absent queen:—

"My sweetest heart, my sister! I bid you adieu. I have never deserved of my sister to be so basely ruined! If it be Thy pleasure I should die, oh, Lord, vouchsafe

* Hol., 863.

to guide my soul to heaven, for I can neither escape nor fly. Alas! my father-in-law of France! I shall never see you more. I leave your daughter among these false, and wicked, and faithless people, I am almost in despair. She was my joyous delight; may you take vengeance for me! the matter concerns you. I have neither vessels, nor men, nor money now to send you; but I leave it to you; it is now too late. O why did we trust Northumberland, who hath delivered us to these wolves? We are all dead men, for they have no pity. *May Heaven confound both their souls and their bodies!*"*

His alternation of resoluteness and despair, when communing with his friends, is natural, and quite consistent with his lonely deportment in the presence of his imperious kinsman.

The whole of the deposition scene was omitted in the play as printed in the reign of Elizabeth.† Is this circumstance connected with the case of Sir Gilly Meyrick?

Shakspeare nowhere notices Richard's devotion to France. Historians tell us that Gloucester's opposition to the peace between his nephew and Charles the Sixth, cemented by the premature marriage with the Princess Isabella, was among the causes of Richard's enmity to his uncle.‡ Yet the

* Arch., xx. 150, 367. Turner, ii. 333.

† Act v., Sc. 1.

‡ Lingard, iv. 234. Turner, ii. 308, from Froissart. Hol. 775.

French king had honourably entertained Bolingbroke in exile, and would have married him to the Duke of Berri's daughter, if Richard had not interfered, according to the allusion in

"Nor the prevention of poor Bolingbroke,
About his marriage."*

Richard's lamentations over his queen are transferred by the poet to an interview between them,† which is quite imaginary, as Richard never saw her after he went to Ireland.‡ They are interrupted by Northumberland announcing that the king is to go to Pomfret,§ and not to the Tower. And Shakspeare now takes occasion to put into the mouth of Richard an address to Northumberland, which may well be set off against the "childish prattle" with the queen which Johnson notices.

"Northumberland, thou ladder, wherewithal
The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne,—
The time shall not be many hours of age
More than it is, ere foul sin, gathering head,
Shall break into corruption: then shall think,
Though he divide the realm, and give thee half,
It is too little, helping him to all;
And he shall think that thou, which know'st the way
To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again,
Being ne'er so little urged, another way

* Act ii., Sc. 1. † See Bosw., 131-2.
‡ Arch., xx. 117-8.
§ I have not ascertained the date of Richard's removal to Pomfret.

To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.
The love of wicked friends converts to fear;
That fear to hate; and hate turns one or both
To worthy danger and deserved death."

But the passage to which Johnson objects is not appropriately designated as "childish prattle;" if it were so, it would not be much out of place, considering the age of the queen. It is one of those absurd conceits in which our poet indulges too often, without reference to the individual into whose mouth he puts them.

Malone truly observes that the first wife of the Duke of York,* mother of Aumerle, had died some years before the deposition of Richard. To her, therefore, York could not address his description of the progress of Richard and Bolingbroke; which, however, is in substance very like that which the state of his feelings would prompt him to give. It is hardly possible to praise this passage too highly. The whole was probably suggested by a passage in the contemporary manuscript, extracted by Stow,† which describes the worthless beasts upon which Richard and his faithful friend, Salisbury, were placed in the progress from Flint to Chester.

* Isabel of Castile died in 1394. Bosw., 146. Sandford, 378. I know not at what period he married his second wife.

† P. 322.

"The duke, with a high, sharp voice, bade bring forth the king's horses, and then two little worthless nags, not worth forty francs, were brought forth; the king was set on one, and the Earl of Salisbury on the other; and then the duke brought the king from Flint to Chester, where he was delivered to the Duke of Gloucester's son, and to the Earl of Arundale's son,—that loved him but a little (for he had put their fathers to death),—who led him straight to the castle."*

"*York*. . . . . The Duke, great Bolingbroke,—
Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed,
Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,
With slow but stately pace kept on his course,
While all tongues cried, God save thee, Bolingbroke!
You would have thought the very windows spake,
So many greedy looks of young and old
Through casements darted their desiring eyes
Upon his visage; and that all the walls,
With painted imagery, had said at once,—
Jesu preserve thee! welcome, Bolingbroke!
Whilst he, from one side to the other turning,
Bare-headed, lower than his proud steed's neck,
Bespake them thus:—I thank you, countrymen:
And thus still doing, thus he passed along.

Duchess. Alas, poor Richard! where rides he the while?

York. As in a theatre, the eyes of men,
After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,

* Stow, 322.

Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious:
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did scowl on Richard; no man cried, God save him;
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head;
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,—
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience,
That, had not God for some strong purpose steel'd
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
And barbarism itself have pitied him."

In a later scene,* the poet has a further improvement of his idea of the horse.

"*Groom.* O, how it yearn'd my heart when I beheld,
In London streets, that coronation day,
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary!
That horse, that thou so often hast bestrid;
That horse, that I so carefully have dressed!

K. Rich. Rode he a Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,
How went he under him?

Groom. So proudly, as if he disdain'd the ground.

K. Rich. So proud that Bolinbroke was on his back!
That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand;
This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.
Would he not stumble? Would he not fall down,
(Since pride must have a fall), and break the neck
Of that proud man that did usurp his back?

* Act v., Sc. 5.

Forgiveness, horse! Why do I rail on thee,
Since thou, created to be aw'd by man,
Wast born to bear? I was not made a horse,
And yet I bear a burden like an ass,
Spur-gall'd and tir'd by jauncing Bolingbroke."*

In the speech of Merkes, Bishop of Carlisle, Shakspeare has followed Holinshed. Historians have doubted whether this speech was delivered at all, what was its purport, and whether it was uttered before or after the recognition and coronation of Henry the Fourth; those who suppose it made after that event, conceiving that, under such circumstances, the arrest of the Bishop was perfectly justifiable.† Malone has correctly observed‡ that the speech, as given in the play, does *not* set forth indefeasible right so strongly as has been supposed; but that here, as in Holinshed, the chief stress is laid upon the condemnation of Richard *in his absence.*

"Thieves are not judged, *but they are by to hear,*
Although apparent guilt be seen in them.
And shall the figure of God's majesty,
His captain, steward, deputy elect,
Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
Be judged by subject and inferior breath,
And he himself not present?"

* Act v., Sc. 5.
† See the Controversy, Arch., 198. ‡ Bosw. 129.

The parliamentary history gives a speech a much greater length than Holinshed, in which the Bishop is made to argue against the several claims which Henry had put forward. One of which* was as the lineal descendant of Henry the Third. This referred to the story of an elder brother of Edward the First, put by for deformity, from whom Henry the Fourth was descended by his mother. The speech contains in itself ample evidence of invention in a later age.

As this Duchess of York was not the mother of Aumerle, her part of the scene which arises out of the conspiracy against the new king is imaginary. The rest of the story, including the father's discovery of the treasonable paper, and the journeys of father and son to Windsor, is taken from Holinshed.† The contemporaneous writers differ; he, to whom I have frequently referred, states this as another instance of the treachery of Aumerle, who, pretending to listen to the overtures made to him, carried them straightway to his father, and then to King Henry.

The other story is more like that which Shakspeare adopts:—

"One day, being at dinner with his father, the Duke of York, he received a private paper, which he appeared to hide with care. He was noticed, and seemed dis-

* Malone's note in Bosw. 128. † iii. 10.

turbed : the Duke of York wished to see the paper, and snatched it from his son by force. It was an account of the conspiracy, and a list of the conspirators. The Duke of York flew into a violent passion with his son. 'Traitor!' said he to him, 'thou knowest I am pledge for thee to the parliament, both in my person and my fortune; I see plainly thou would'st have my life, but, by St. John, *I had rather that thou shouldst be hanged than me.*"*

We now come to the death of Richard,† whom Shakspeare, following Holinshed, supposes to have been murdered by Sir Pierce of Exton, in consequence of a dark hint from Henry.

This story is now generally disbelieved, and the prevalent opinion is that Richard died a natural death in prison, in the year 1399, or early in 1400. Sir Harris Nicolas is of this opinion.‡ Some think that he starved himself to death, others that he was starved by his keepers. On the other hand, it has been maintained by Mr. Tytler§ that he escaped, and lived for several years in Scotland. The controversy is much too voluminous for us, and I would refer those who wish to have a notion

* Gaillard's Narrative in Extracts from French MSS., ii. 228.

† Act v., Sc. 5.

‡ See Gent. Mag. xciii., 196, 314, 589; xciv. 220. See also Privy Council Records, i. iii.; and the Controversy in Arch. xx. 424; xxiii. 277; xxv. 394.

§ Hist. of Scotland, vol. iii. p. 325.

of it to a paper read by the late Lord Dover to the Royal Society of Literature, on the 4th of May, 1832. Lord Dover sums up carefully and fairly, and finally pronounces judgment in favour of Mr. Amyot, who disbelieves the Scottish story. According to that story, Richard survived his deposition nineteen years, and was living in Scotland during the whole of the troublesome reign of Henry the Fourth, while his death was of so much importance to the King, and his life to the powerful lords that were against him. The improbability appears to me to be herein too great to be overcome by any but the most perfect evidence.

The lamentations of Henry over the body of his predecessor are entirely Shakspeare's.

The execution of "Salisbury, Spencer, Blunt, and Kent," and of "Brocas and Sir Bennet Seely," who were concerned in the conspiracy betrayed by Aumerle, is conformable to history.*

"This play," says Johnson, "is one of those that Shakspeare has apparently revised ;† but, as success in works of invention is not always proportioned to labour, it is not finished at last with the happy force of some other of his tragedies, nor can be said much to affect the passions or enlarge the understanding."

* Hol., iii. 13. According to one account Salisbury was slain in battle. Huntingdon (late Exeter) was put to death by the tenants of the late Duke of Gloucester.

† Malone doubts this.

Few plays operate upon the understanding; but Richard II. contains passages, some of which I have indulged myself in copying, which might have drawn from the critic much warmer commendation. Readers not contented with Johnson will do well to read Coleridge, who says:—

"In itself, and for the closet, I feel no hesitation in placing it as the first and most admirable of all Shakspeare's purely historical plays."*

Yet I know not whether, in listening to the severe and to the enthusiastic critic, they will have more to add to the one, or to deduct from the other.

The characters of Richard, of Bolingbroke, and of York, are sufficiently true to nature and to history, so far as Shakspeare was acquainted with it. Richard, reckless in prosperity, weak in adversity; Bolingbroke, bold and ambitious, and courting popularity; York, timid and wavering, or, viewed more favourably, halting between his loyalty and his patriotism.† The darker traits in Richard's character are not strongly depicted, or brought to bear more freely on the story, not only because the Chronicles scarcely notice them, but because homicides were, in the fourteenth century, not regarded as we regard them now. The murder of Glou-

* Literary Remains, ii. 164.

† See Coleridge, p. 173.

cester has been treated, at no distant period, as a justifiable exceeding of regal powers.* The historical character of Northumberland is doubtful; there is no inconsistency in that which Shakspeare has drawn of him.

* "The murder of Gloucester (for the secret execution, however merited, of that prince, certainly deserves this appellation) was a private deed, formed not any precedent, and implied not any usurped or arbitrary power of the crown, which could justly give umbrage to the people. It really proceeded from a defect of power in the king rather than from his ambition, and proves that, instead of being dangerous to the constitution, he possessed not even the authority necessary for the execution of the laws."—Hume, iii. 42.

HENRY IV.—Part I.

Nearly all the most important events in the reign of Henry Bolingbroke are referred to in the two plays which bear his name. "The First Part of Henry the Fourth" commences with the announcement (continued from "Richard the Second") of Henry's intention to make an expedition to the Holy Land. I cannot trace this intention at this early period of the reign. If it existed, it was soon superseded by the two occurrences of the year 1402, which are mentioned in the first scene, and which bring to our notice those two remarkable characters, Owen Glendower and Henry Hotspur.* Owen had defeated the English troops in June 1402, and captured Edmund Mortimer; Hotspur had in September, at the head of the King's troops in the north, defeated the Scots at Homildon,† when the Earl of Fife, eldest son of

* Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur, eldest son of the Northumberland of whom we heard in "Richard the Second." Hotspur was born in 1365 or 1366.

† This battle was fought on the 14th of September, 1402,

the Duke of Albany,* and Archibald Earl of Douglas,† were taken prisoners.

The Chronicle‡ is followed as to the Welsh and Scottish battles. The defeat and capture of Mortimer by Owen Glendower, and the maltreatment of the dead bodies by the Welsh women, are related almost in the words of Holinshed. And all historians agree that Hotspur's victory at Homildon was won by the English archers.§ "With violence of the English *shot* the Scots were quite vanquished and put to flight:" this sentence of Holinshed is probably the origin of a line in Shakspeare conveying an idea of a very different weapon from the bow—

> " Where they did spend a sad and bloody hour;
> As by *discharge of their artillery*,
> And shape of likelihood, the news was told."‖

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near Wooler, within the English border.—See Hol. iii. 20; Tytler's Scotland, iii. 128; Lingard, iv. 387.

* Steevens explains (Bosw. 187) how Shakspeare was misled *by the omission of a comma* in Holinshed (iii. 21) into calling Fife "eldest son to beaten Douglas." Here is a curious illustration of the importance of punctuation, and of Shakspeare's reliance upon the Chronicler. Albany was brother to King Robert the Third.

† Archibald Douglas, fourth Earl of Douglas, surnamed the *Tineman*, *i. e. Loseman*, from his repeated defeats and miscarriages. (Walter Scott's preface to 'Halidon Hill.') On the present occasion he lost not only his liberty but an eye. (Otterbourne, 245.) He was slain 1424, fighting in France against the Duke of Bedford.

‡ Hol. 20. § Otterbourne, 237.

‖ Act i. Sc. 1. Westmoreland, who gives this description,

The denial of the prisoners, of which Shakspeare makes so much, is mentioned by Holinshed, on the authority of Hardyng,* who says that Northumberland gave up his prisoner, namely, the Earl of Fife;

> " But Sir Henry his son then would not bring
> His prisoners in no wise to the King."

As a follower of the Percies, Hardyng is entitled to credit on this point, but the King's demand of the prisoners does not appear among the alleged causes of rebellion, nor is it dwelt upon by other writers of the time. The only official document with which I am acquainted prohibits the captors from permitting their prisoners to return to Scotland *on ransom*, but does not require the persons or value of the captives, and contains an especial *salvo* of the rights of the captors.†

was Ralph Neville, Lord Neville of Raby, created Earl of Westmoreland by Richard the Second. The Earl of Abergavenny is his lineal descendant and heir male.—Colings, v. 151.

* P. 360, Hol. 22, Hall, 27.

† Writ directed to the two Percies and others, 22d Sept. 1402—Rymer, vol. viii. 278. A commentator says (Bosw. 188) that by the law of arms any man who had taken any captive whose redemption did not exceed 10,000 crowns had him clearly to himself, either to acquit or ransom at his pleasure. The indentures of service sometimes contained a special reserve as to prisoners of great importance. (See Rymer, ix. 233.) It does not seem at all unreasonable that

The mention of Hotspur's bravery introduces the name of the Prince of Wales, afterwards Henry the Fifth.

"No words," says Campbell,* "can do justice to the discriminating traits of valorous character in Prince Henry, in Hotspur, in Douglas, in Owen Glendower. The first rises to glory out of previous habits and pursuits that would have extinguished any character unpossessed of the unquenchable Greek fire in Henry of Agincourt, and who shines, as Homer said of Diomed 'like a star that had been bathed in the ocean.' He is comparatively wiser than the irascible Hotspur, and therefore more justly successful. The Scottish Douglas retreats at last, but it is only when the field is lost, and he had slain three warriors who were the semblance of the King. He was personally little interested in the fray, his reputation could afford him to retreat without expense to his honour, and therefore he shows after prodigal valour a discretion which is quite as nationally characteristic as his courage. Owen Glendower is a noble wild picture of the heroic Welsh character—brave, vain, imaginative, and superstitious. He was the William Wallace of Wales, and his vanity and superstition may be forgiven, for he troubled the English till

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the King should, on great occasions, interfere to prohibit the setting free a prisoner who might be dangerous to the realm.

* In his preface to a new edition of Shakspeare, p. xxxix.

they believed him, and taught him to believe himself, a conjuror."

Much of this is just—as applicable to the heroes whom Shakspeare drew: I shall now inquire whether he drew from history. A passage at the end of the play of "Richard the Second," prepares us for the unfavourable picture of the young Henry's behaviour, which fills so great a space in the two parts of "Henry the Fourth."

"*Boling*. Can no man tell of my unthrifty son?
'Tis full three months since I did see him last:—
If any plague hang over us, 'tis he.
Inquire at London, 'mongst the taverns there,
For there, they say, he daily doth frequent
With unrestrained loose companions."*

After some further detail of his extravagancies, Hotspur himself is made to relate that he saw the Prince two days before, who, on being invited to an exercise of arms at Oxford, gave an answer indicative both of profligacy and boldness; so as to induce his father to say—

"As dissolute as desperate; yet through both
I see some sparkles of a better hope,
Which elder days may happily bring forth."

Malone noticed† the anachronism of ascribing these habits to the Prince, who, having been born in 1387, was now only thirteen years old: but no

* "Richard the Second," Act v. Sc. 3. † Bosw. 152.

other doubt occurred to his mind of the accuracy of Shakspeare's description. Mr. Luders,* I believe, first called in question the received opinion of Henry's irregularities; and the recent publication of Mr. Tyler† is an elaborate attempt to confute it.

In the present play the King expresses a wish that it could be discovered that the two Henries had been changed in infancy.

> "Oh, that it could be proved
> That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
> In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,
> And call'd mine—Percy, his—Plantagenet!"‡

And we are taught throughout the play to look upon the Prince and Hotspur as contemporaries and rivals. Now, Henry Percy was old enough to be the other Henry's father; being of the age of Henry *the Fourth*.§ And Mr. Tyler has shown that nothing can be more inaccurate than to represent Percy as bearing testimony against the young Prince, whose exertions, on the contrary,

* Essay on the Character of Henry the Fifth, when Prince of Wales: by Alexander Luders. 1813.

† Henry of Monmouth, or Memoirs of the Life and Character of Henry the Fifth: by the Rev. John Endell Tyler. 1838.

‡ Act i. Sc. 1.

§ Henry the Fourth was born April 6, 1366.

towards the suppression of the rebellion of the Welshmen, he recognized in his letters to the Council.*

But, *was* the Prince a young profligate, addicted to low company and of vicious habits, or are all Shakspeare's scenes in which Falstaff is introduced the mere creation of the poet? Mr. Tyler clearly shows that Henry was, from an unusually early age, and even while under tutelage, actively employed against the rebels; and we have his father's letters noticing his "*bonne exploit* en parties de Gales." And he had recently been appointed lieutenant of Wales.† Yet this may be

* Tyler, i. 102, 3. This author has printed a letter, purporting to come from Prince Henry to his father's council, of date May 15 (1401, as Tyler supposes), on his operations against Glendower. I entertain the doubt which Tyler anticipates, whether Henry (who had not only a council in attendance upon him, but a governor or tutor also) wrote this letter himself; but nothing of importance turns upon it. It is not probable, too, that the letters printed in Tyler's pages 104 and 137, both dated from Shrewsbury in May, were written in the same year?—See Nicolas's Privy Council, ii. 61, 62.

† Tyler, i. 100, 102, 135. Nicolas's Privy Council, i. 206. From the incompleteness of his references, it is very difficult to trace Mr. Tyler's authorities. I am sorry to observe that the letter of 15th May, 1401, cited by Tyler, as that of "a gallant young warrior, full of promptitude and intrepidity," indicates rather too much of severity in the young Prince.

true, and still the story of his dissoluteness may be true also. How many guardsmen and dragoons have we all known, who have been notorious in their excesses, yet gallant and attentive officers!

Shakspeare drew the character of Henry from the Chronicles which existed in English in his time; partly, too, from the old play;* and partly, perhaps, from tradition. In order to heighten the contrast, he has generally taken the most unfavourable version of the stories against the Prince.

The second act exhibits the Prince in very low company, and concerned in the robbery at Gadshill, near Rochester, of some public officers who were conveying money to the King's Exchequer. There is nothing here that might not have been taken from the old play, and there are minute circumstances† which show that Shakspeare had that coarse and worthless drama in his hand. But he had also the accustomed authority of Holinshed for the general profligacy, and that of Stow for the particular enormities.

"He made himself a companion to misruly mates of dissolute order and life."‡

* "The famous victories of Henry the Fifth, containing the memorable battle of Agincourt," in the six old plays. It takes in the King's youth, as represented in Shakspeare's "Henry the Fourth."

† Especially the robbery of a *carrier* at Gadshill.

‡ Hol. 61.

"He lived somewhat insolently, insomuch that whilst his father lived, being accompanied with some of his *young lords and gentlemen*, he would wait in disguised array *for his own receivers*, and distress them of their money. And sometimes at such enterprises both he and his company were sorely beaten. And when their receivers made their complaint to him, how they were robbed in coming unto him, *he would give them discharge of so much money as they had lost*. And besides that, they should not depart without great rewards for their trouble and vexation; especially they should be rewarded that best had resisted him and his company, and of whom he had received the greatest and most strokes."*

All this is very bad, but there is nothing here to justify the poet in connecting Henry with *professed highwaymen*.

I have had some doubt whether Shakspeare intended to represent the companions of the Prince as persons originally in low life.† My doubt is partly grounded upon the names which he has selected, (for they are all his own), being mostly the names of good families of the time. I shall not enter into the controversy concerning Falstaff,‡ except to observe that the name, whether of Falstaff, Fastolffe, or Oldcastle, was certainly the name

* Stow, 342. † Act i. Sc. 2; Act ii. Sc. 1, 2, 4.

‡ See Bosw. xvi. 410.

of a gentleman. Bardolph was a noble name, as we learn from the second part of this very play, *Poins** also belonged to gentle blood. Still, considering the situations and demeanour which Shakspeare assigns to such of these men as appeared in the French wars, I cannot but conclude that, though these good names occurred to him, and though he wrote one passage applicable only to gentlemen, he intended to draw professional thieves.

Perhaps a distinction is to be made as to Poins, whom the poet makes the especial favourite of the Prince, and possibly intended us to regard him as, like the Prince, an amateur robber. Though the frolic of "robbing the thieves"† is not precisely that which Stow describes, it is sufficiently near to it; and Stow is followed as to the repayment:—

"*Prince.* O, my sweet beef, I must still be good angel to thee; the money is paid back again.

"*Falstaff.* O, I do not like that paying back; 'tis a double labour."

But Stow could only write from tradition, or some older authority; and Mr. Luders‡ has shown clearly that there is not contemporary authority for the story, in either of its shapes. Those writers who could have witnessed, or have learned from

* I know not whether the Poyntzes of Sussex claim to be descended from the Poins who flourished about this time. See Banks, i. 401. † Act ii. Sc. 2. ‡ P. 98.

recent information, the practices of the Prince, convey to us the notion that Henry was deeply stained with all the vices of his years, and was led into the excesses which unrestrained youth is apt to fall into: but, it is added, that it was only in the interval allowed by his martial duties that he indulged in them:* and this indeed was apparently Shakspeare's impression.

Other writers only testify by inference; they tell us of the Prince's subsequent reformation, (to which the second part of this play will lead us,) and from this we are to collect that there was much to reform. According to Shakspeare, indeed, this intended reformation was always in the mind of the Prince, who tells us, in an artificial soliloquy, that, like the sun, whose splendour is more admired when he breaks through a mist,

"So, when this loose behaviour I throw off,
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
And, like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes,
Than that which hath no foil to set it off."†

Shakspeare certainly wished his hearers to contemplate Henry from the beginning as not irre-

* Elmham, p. 12, quoted by Luders, p. 7. Elmham follows, with some modification, the writer whom we call Titus Livius.

† Act i. Sc. 2.

trievably lost; for we have seen* that even his father, when at the height of his displeasure, looked forward to an amendment.

But the most popular and striking of the heroes of this play is to be found among the Percies, whom the third scene of the first act places in angry conference with the King, concerning the prisoners of Homildon, and the ransoming of Mortimer.

Shakspeare imputes a peculiar degree of hostility to the Earl of Worcester,† the brother of Northumberland. Referring to Hotspur's disobedience, Westmoreland says,—

> "This is his uncle's teaching, this is Worcester—
> Malevolent to you in all aspects."‡

Hardyng says that the three Percies jointly endeavoured to persuade Henry not to assume the crown, and makes no distinction between them. All the three brothers had been employed by Richard, and decorated with the Garter; and both the brothers had received earldoms from him. Shakspeare's authority is Holinshed,‖ who says of Worcester, "Whose study was ever (as some write) to procure malice and set things in a broil;" and calls him "the procurer and setter forth of all the mischief."§

* P. 79. † Thomas Percy. ‡ Act i. Sc. 1. ‖ iii. 22.

§ It is difficult to get at the prime origin of a statement. This is copied from Walsingham, but he only says,—"inventor (*ut dicitur*) totius mali."—P. 369.

The perfumed Lord who was sent by the King to demand Hotspur's prisoners, is the creation of Shakspeare, to set off the character of that rough and impatient soldier.

"*Hotspur*. My liege, I did deny no prisoners.
But I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat, trimly dress'd,
Fresh as a bridegroom, and his chin new reap'd
Shew'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home.
He was perfumed like a milliner,
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose, and took't away again;
Who therewith angry, when it next came there,
Took it in snuff, and still he smil'd and talk'd;
And as the soldiers bare dead bodies by,
He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
With many holiday and lady terms
He question'd me; among the rest, demanded
My prisoners in your Majesty's behalf.
I then, all smarting, with my wounds being cold,
To be so pester'd with a popinjay!
Out of my grief and my impatience,
Answered neglectingly I know not what;
He should, or should not: for he made me mad,
To see him shine so brisk, and smell so sweet,

And talk so like a waiting gentlewoman,
Of guns, and drums, and wounds, (God save the mark!)
And telling me the sovereign'st thing on earth
Was parmaceti for an inward bruise;
And that it was great pity, so it was,
That villainous saltpetre should be digged
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd
So cowardly, and but for these vile guns,
He would himself have been a soldier.
This bold unjointed chat of his, my lord,
I answer'd indirectly, as I said;
And I beseech you let not this report
Come current for an accusation,
Betwixt my love and your high majesty."

The character of Hotspur too is admirably kept up in the violent speeches about Mortimer, and the ridicule of the flatteries of Bolingbroke:—

"Why, what a candy deal of courtesy
This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!
Look,—*when his infant fortune came to age*,—
And,—*gentle Harry Percy*,—and, *kind cousin*."*

Music was classed among effeminate employments, and Hotspur is judiciously made a despiser of that fascinating art,† in which he differs both from the Prince of Wales and from Owen Glendower. Whenever he appears, his character of this northern hero is sustained with consummate

* Act i. Sc. 3. † Act iii. Sc. 1.

skill as an impetuous, hot, and haughty, but generous, as well as brave and skilful, warrior.

But all this is Shakspeare's own; the Hotspur of history is a gallant soldier and able commander, but we do not even know that he was "irascible;" and he might have been, for anything to be found in the Chronicles, a director, as other warriors are, of a public concert, and have possessed all the virtues and accomplishments of gentle life.

The surname of *Hotspur* had no reference to his disposition or temper: "this Henry," says a Chronicler,* speaking of the early part of Richard the Second, "was called by the French and Scots *Harre Hatesporre*, because, in the silence of the night, and while others reposed in sleep, he would labour indefatigably against his enemy, as if heating his spurs, which we call Hatesporre." Another writer says, that "the hopes of the whole nation were reposed in him;"† and in all the Chronicles, including those of later date from which Shakspeare wrote, all terms of praise are bestowed upon the martial spirit and great power of this famous Percy, but there is no trace of the peculiar character so skilfully and agreeably delineated by the poet. It would perhaps be more easy, and doubtless more gratifying, to justify from history such

* Knighton, p. 2696.

† Wals. 367.

passages as the following, than those which display testiness or rudeness:—

"By Heav'n, methinks, it were an easy leap,
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon;
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks;
So he that doth redeem her thence might wear,
Without corrival, all her dignities."

Mr. Tyler agrees with Sir Harris Nicolas, in tracing in certain letters from Hotspur, recently published,* "a strict accordance with the supposed haughty, captious, and uncompromising character of that excellent soldier." I doubt whether this remark would have been made, if Shakspeare had not taught us to believe that Hotspur deserved the epithets: the letters, in truth, contain firm but temperate remonstrances at the unprovided state in which he was left as commander of the King's army; and a protest, that the responsibility of failure rested not upon him, but upon those who withheld the necessary payments. Of haughtiness or captiousness I find no more than the occasion might well require.

In one of these letters Hotspur uses an expression which I quote, because there is a remarkable, though, I am satisfied an accidental, coincidence

* Tyler, i. 99. Nicolas, i. p. xxxviii. and 148.

with a line in the play.—"Do not be displeased," he says to the council, "that I write—*nounsachantment en ma royde et feble manier*."

If it had been possible for Shakspeare to have read this passage, I should suppose that the word *nounsachantment* was amplified in the description of the interview with the finicking courtier, to whom Hotspur "answered neglectingly I know not what."

The poet is borne out not only by the Chronicle, but by more authentic history, in classing among the grievances of Percy the King's rejection of his request—

> "That we, at our own charge, shall ransom straight
> His brother-in-law, the foolish Mortimer,
> Who, on my soul, hath wilfully betray'd
> The lives of those that he did lead to fight
> Against the great magician, damn'd Glendower."*

This insinuation on the part of the King, that Mortimer suffered himself to be captured, is ascribed to him in a manifesto of dubious authenticity, (to be noticed presently,) and is mentioned by Hardyng;†

> "He said him nay, for he was taken prisoner
> By his consent and treason to his foe."

I do not agree with Mr. Tyler, that the King's

* Act i. Sc. 3. † P. 380. 368

letter,* lamenting the capture of his cousin, proves that he entertained no such suspicion. That letter was written some months before Mortimer married the daughter of the Welsh chieftain,† and wrote thus to his tenants:—

"Owen Glendower has raised a quarrel of which the object is, *if King Richard be alive*, to restore him to his crown, and if not, that my honoured nephew (Earl of March), who is the right heir to the said crown, shall be King of England, and that the said Owen will assert his right in Wales."‡

When such events followed a capture, it was not unreasonable to suspect that the surrender was voluntary. Shakspeare did not seek for romantic incidents, still less imagine them; many a dramatist, still more a novelist, would have imagined Mortimer captivated in the first instance by the charms of the mountain nymph, accidentally discovered playing upon her harp, and for her sake abandoning King Henry.

Skakspeare also owes to Holinshed his mistake,§ in supposing that the Edmund Mortimer, who was prisoner and afterwards son-in-law to Glendower,

* June 25, 1402. Nicolas, i. 185. Tyler, i. 162. And Walsingham speaks (p. 365) of Mortimer's capture *proditione mediante*.

† Stow, 328. Otterb. 238. ‡ Tyler, 135.

§ Malone and others have fallen into the same error. (Bosw., 219, 220).

was Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March,* whom King Richard had proclaimed heir to the crown, and who was, according to hereditary right, now entitled to it. The Earl of March was at this time a child: it was his uncle, Sir Edmund Mortimer (second son of the first Earl of March)† whose adventures Shakspeare relates and misapplies.

"*Hotspur*.....Did King Richard, then,
Proclaim my brother, Edmund Mortimer,
Heir to the crown? ‡
"*North*. He did."

Hotspur calls Mortimer his brother, because he married his sister Elizabeth. §

For one scene in this play I can find no authority. It is that ‖ in which Hotspur reads a letter from a correspondent, who endeavours to dissuade him from his enterprise. Nothing shows more curiously how these historical plays have taken

* Tyler, i. 130. I cannot find any ancient authority for supposing the prisoner to have been the Earl of March.

† By Philippa, heiress of Lionel Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward the Third. ‡ Act i. Sc. 3.

§ Shakspeare (Act ii. Sc. 3, &c.) calls this lady *Kate*; Hall and Holinshed call her Elinor, and mention that she was aunt to the Earl of March, on which account Shakspeare, apparently forgetting that he had correctly styled Lady Percy Mortimer's sister, in another place (Act iii. Sc. 1.) makes Mortimer speak of her as his aunt. There is throughout a confusion between uncle and nephew.

‖ Act ii. Sc. 3.

the place of history, than the pains taken to trace this letter by tradition to a particular person. One commentator,* against all probability, ascribes it to the Scottish Lord March; while Mr. Morritt of Rokeby, the friend of Scott, traces it to a Rokeby, who was sheriff of Northumberland;† but this Rokeby fought *against* the rebels.‡

Of the wife of Hotspur, history furnishes nothing but the name. I am therefore not called upon to exercise the ungracious duty of calling in question Mrs. Jamieson's beautiful and judicious sketch of her.§

Shakspeare is borne out by the Chronicles in calling Owen Glendower a *magician*, and introducing the wonders which preceded his birth.

"This Owen Glendower," says Holinshed,‖ "was son to an esquire of Wales, named Griffith Vichen (Vaughan?);¶ he dwelled in the parish of Conway, within the county of Merioneth, in North Wales, in a place called Glindourwie, which is as much as to say in English, as the valley by the side of the water of Dee, by occasion of which he was surnamed Glendour

* Edwards, in Bosw., 251.

† Lockart, ii. 385. ‡ Hol. 45.

§ Characteristics of Women, ii. 238.

‖ iii. 17. Owen was born in 1359.

¶ I do not know whether the amiable, honest, and hospitable Sir Robert Vaughan, late member for Merionethshire, is of this house.

Dew. He was first set to study the laws of the realm, *and became an utter barrister, or an apprentice of the law,* as they termed him, and served King Richard at Flint Castle, when he was taken by Henry Duke of Lancaster; though others have written that he served this King Henry the Fourth before he came to attend the Crown in the room of an esquire."

....." In the month of March (1402) appeared a blazing star, first between the east part of the firmament and the north, flashing forth fire and flames round about it, and lastly, shooting forth fiery beams towards the north, foreshowing (as was thought) the great effusion of blood that followed about the parts of Wales and Northumberland. In much about the same time, Owen Glendower, with his Welshmen, fought with the Lord Grey of Ruthin, coming forth to defend his possessions, which the same Owen wasted and destroyed."..... " About mid August, the King, to chastise the presumptuous attempt of the Welshman, went with a great power of men into Wales, to pursue the captain of the Welsh rebels, Owen Glendower; but in effect he lost his labour, for Owen conveyed himself out of the way into his known lurking-places, and, as was thought, *through art magic,** he caused such foul weather of winds, tempests, rain, snow, and hail to be raised, for the annoyance of

* Wals. 365. Hardying, p. 360, says—

" The King had nothing but tempest foul, and rain,
As long as he was ay in Wales ground,
Rocks and mists, winds and storms certain,
All men trowed that witches it made that stourde."

the King's army, that the King was constrained to return home, having caused his people yet to spoil and burn first a great part of the country."..... "Strange wonders happened, as men reported, at the nativity of this man, for the same night he was born all his father's horses in the stable were found to stand in blood up to their bellies."*

With a little amplification, and some transposition of dates, these passages justify our poet.

" ——————— at my nativity,
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
Of burning cressets; and, at my birth,
The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shaked like a coward."

But, while Owen thus boasted of preternatural incidents, he took pains also to impress upon his English friend Hotspur that he was familiar with the arts of gentle life.

" I can speak English, lord, as well as you,
For I was train'd up in the English court;
Where, being but young, I framed to the harp
Many an English ditty, lovely well,
And gave the tongue a helpful ornament;
A virtue that was never seen in you."

I do not understand why the Welsh chieftain is made to boast of his musical accomplishments (of

* Hol. 17, 19, 20, 21. This is all from Walsingham, p. 367.

which history knows nothing), rather than of the law studies which are recorded by the Chronicler. Perhaps it was to introduce Hotspur's disclaimer of such effeminate practices.

"I had rather be a kitten, and cry—mew,
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers.
I'd rather hear a brazen canstick turn'd,
Or a dry wheel grate on the axle-tree;
And that would set my teeth nothing on edge,
Nothing so much as mincing poetry;
'Tis like the forc'd gait of a shuffling nag."

I know not whether it is accidentally or by design that these unpoetical sentiments are put into stiff and prosaic verse. I shall quote no more of such heresies: what follows is very characteristic of Shakspeare's Hotspur:—

"——— I'll give thrice so much land
To any well-deserving friend;
But, in the way of bargain, mark ye me,
I'll cavil on the ninth part of a hair."

The contrast in regard to *music* should have been made between the two Henries, since Henry Plantagenet was undoubtedly a musician.* Perhaps the character of the Welsh hero is less clearly developed than either of the others. But Campbell has forgotten that this mountain chief was bred in Lincoln's Inn, and followed the court of Richard the

* Elmham, as noted in p. 5.

Second. These are the facts, and Shakspeare has painted Owen accordingly. If he was "a conjuror," he learnt his art in the English court, rather than in the wilds of Merionethshire.

> "In faith, he is a worthy gentleman;
> *Exceedingly well read, and profited*
> *In strange concealments;* valiant as a lion,
> And *wond'rous affable;* and as bountiful
> As mines of India."

I know not whether he was imaginative, but he construed his daughter's Welsh into gentle and poetical English :—

> "——————— She bids you
> Upon the wanton rushes lay you down,
> And rest your gentle head upon her lap,
> And she will sing the song that pleaseth you,
> And on your eye-lids crown the god of sleep,
> Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness;
> Making such difference 'twixt wake and sleep,
> As is the difference 'twixt day and night,
> The hour before the heavenly-harness'd team
> Begins his golden progress in the east."

It is, again, for the purpose of a contrast with the impatient Percy, that Owen Glendower, without any warrant in history or probability, is made *a bore.*

> "——— O, he's as tedious
> As is a tired horse, a railing wife;

Worse than a smoky house:—I'd rather live
With cheese and garlick, in a windmill, far,
Than feed on cates, and have him talk to me,
In any summer-house in Christendom."

In Hotspur's description of the subjects of this tedious talk he alludes to

" the dreamer Merlin, and his prophecies."

The three conspirators fancied themselves typified by a wolf, a dragon, and a lion, by whom the kingdom was, according to the prophet, to be divided. In this prophecy the Chronicles* are followed, as well as in making the house of the Archdeacon of Bangor the scene of these discussions, and of the treaty between Mortimer, the Percies, and Glendower, for a tripartite division of the king's dominions.† I have no space for considering Mr. Tyler's doubts of the authenticity of this treaty of partition; supported or not by history, the whole scene is eminently good. And so is that which follows,‡ in which the king takes the prince to task for his wild courses, and neglect of public affairs. There is no authority for such remonstrance, and it is certain that no such could have taken place on the eve of the battle of Shrewsbury. There, probably, never was a prince who, at his age, for he was now only sixteen, had

* See the notes in Bosw., 312, and Hol. 22. For Glendower's character and end, see Tyler, i. 244.

† P. 141. ‡ Act iii. Sc. 2.

so honourably distinguished himself: the terms applied in the following passage to his supposed rival might with more reason have been applied to him:—

> " Thrice has this Hotspur *Mars in swathing clothes,*
> *This infant warrior,* in his enterprise,
> Discomfited great Douglas; ta'en him once,
> Enlarged him, and made a friend of him."

For Henry Plantagenet was but a boy, whereas Percy himself, of whom Shakspeare says—

> " And being no more in debt to years than thou,"

was now six-and-thirty years old—the age of the father, not of the son. But this is not the only use which the poet has made of his licence in this passage—Percy, so far from being uniformly successful in his enterprises against the Douglas, having been himself taken at the battle of Otterbourne, when he would have been prisoner to Douglas, had not the gallant Earl James been slain in the action.* It does not appear that young Henry had as yet been admitted into the Privy Council, but he had a council of his own, as well as a governor:†—the whole scene is out of place. It has already been

* Collins, ii. 268.

† Or *Maitre.* See Tyler, p. 100, Nicolas, 176, 177. The Council recommended Lord Worcester, Lord Lovel, or Thomas Erpingham. It appears that Worcester was appointed. Wals. 367.

remarked by commentators,* that the following lines are improperly placed here:—

" Thy place in council thou hast rudely lost,
Which by thy younger brother is supplied."

I shall revert to them hereafter; but I solicit the insertion of some parts of the king's remonstrance, which appear to me exceedingly touching and effective, and much to be praised for the beauty and appropriate stateliness of the rhythm.

" I know not whether God will have it so,
For some displeasing service I have done,
That in his secret doom, out of my blood
He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me;
But thou dost, in thy passages of life,
Make me believe,—that thou art only mark'd
For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven,
To punish my mis-treadings. Tell me else,
Could such inordinate and low desires,
Such poor, such base, such lewd, such mean attempts,
Such barren pleasures, rude society,
As thou art match'd withal and grafted to,
Accompany the greatness of thy blood,
And hold their level with thy princely heart?"

Again—

" Had I so lavish of my presence been,
So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,
So stale and cheap to vulgar company;

* Bosw., 325.

Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
Had still kept loyal to possession,
And left me in reputeless banishment,
A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.
By being seldom seen, I could not stir,
But, like a comet, I was wonder'd at :
That men would tell their children, *This is he ;*
Others would say,—*Where ? which is Bolingbroke ?*
And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,
And dress'd myself in such humility,
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,
Even in the presence of the crowned king.
Thus did I keep my person fresh and new ;
My presence, like a robe pontifical,
Ne'er seen, but wonder'd at : and so my state
Seldom, but sumptuous, showed like a feast,
And won, by rareness, such solemnity.
The skipping king, he ambled up and down
With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,
Soon kindled and soon burn'd : 'carded his state ;
Mingled his royalty with capering fools ;
Had his great name profaned with their scorns ;
And gave his countenance, against his name,
To laugh at gibing boys, and stand the push
Of every beardless vain comparative :
Grew a companion to the common streets,
Enfeoff'd himself to popularity :
That, being daily swallow'd by men's eyes,
They surfeited with honey, and began

To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little
More than a little is by much too much.
So, when he had occasion to be seen,
He was but as the cuckoo is in June,
Heard, not regarded." . . . .
——— "For all the world,
As thou art to this hour was Richard then,
When I from France set foot at Ravenspurg;
And even as I was then, is Percy now."

The comparison of Prince Henry with Richard the Second is very beautiful, but not appropriate; Henry at no time of his life displayed any want of energy, or suffered his love of pleasure to interfere with the active duties in which the greater part of his life was spent. If the people were familiar with his name, it was chiefly because his martial deeds were in every mouth.

I find no warrant, either in the play or the history, for Schlegel's notion that the king's jealousy of his son's brilliant qualities drove Henry into loose company, in order to avoid the appearance of ambition.* As Shakspeare took from his favourite Chronicles the notion of a difference (to which he has assigned an erroneous date†) between the king and the prince, it is remarkable that he did not dra-

* A. W. Schlegel, Cours de Lit. Dram., iii. 97.

† The interview, according to Holinshed, took place in 1412, nearly ten years after the battle of Shrewsbury.

matise an incident related by Holinshed as occurring in the interview.

"Whilst these things were a doing in France, the Lord Henry Prince of Wales got knowledge that certain of his father's servants were busy to give information against him, whereby discord might raise betwixt him and his father; for they put into the king's head, not only *what evil rule* (*according to the course of youth*) *the prince kept* to the offence of many, but also what great resort of people came to his house, so that the court was nothing furnished with such a train as daily followed the prince. These tales brought no small suspicion into the king's head, lest his son would presume to usurp the crown, he being yet alive, through which suspicious jealousy it was perceived that *he favoured not his son as in times past he had done*. The prince, sore offended with such persons, as by slanderous reports sought not only to spot his good name abroad in the realm, but to sow discord also betwixt him and his father, wrote his letters into every part of the realm to reprove all such slanderous devices of those that sought his discredit; and, to clear himself, the better that the world might understand what wrong he had to be slandered in such wise, about the feast of Peter and Paul, to wit the 29th day of June, he came to the court with such a number of noblemen and other his friends that wished him well, as the like train had seldom been seen repairing to the court at any one time in those days. He was apparelled in a gown of blue satin, full of small

eyelet-holes, at every hole the needle hanging by a silk thread, with which it was sewed. About his arm he wore a hound's collar, set full of SS of gold, and the tirets likewise being of the same metal."*

In this strange dress, not, however, as I believe altogether his own fancy,* the Prince and his companions entered the Royal Hall at Westminster: he commanded his followers to halt in the middle of the Hall (though pressed by the Lords to advance), while he himself was conducted by some officers of the household into the Privy Chamber of the King, then grievously diseased. There, kneeling down before his father, he said—

"'Most redoubted and sovereign lord and father, I am at this time come to your presence as your liege man, and as your natural son, in all things to be at your commandment. And where I understand you have in suspicion my demeanour against your grace, you know very well that if I knew any man within this realm of whom you should stand in fear, my duty were to punish that person, thereby to remove that grief from your heart. Then how much more ought I to suffer death, to ease your grace of that grief which you have of me, being your natural son and liege man? and to that end I have this day made myself ready by confession and receiving of the sacrament. And, therefore, I beseech you, most redoubted

* Hol. iii. 53. Stow, 339.

† I am sorry that I cannot now refer to the book in which I have seen a dress of this sort described.

lord and dear father, for the honour of God, to ease your heart of all such suspicion as you have of me, and *to despatch me here before your knees, with this same dagger :'* [and withal he delivered to the King his dagger with all humble reverence, adding further, that his life was not so dear to him that he wished to live one day in his displeasure,] 'and, therefore, in thus ridding me out of life, and yourself from all suspicion, here in presence of these lords, and before God, at the day of the general judgment I faithfully protest clearly to forgive you.' The King, moved herewith, cast from him the dagger, and, embracing the Prince, kissed him, and with shedding tears confessed that indeed he had him partly in suspicion, though now (as he perceived) not with just cause. Henry requested that his accusers might be punished, but the King said, that 'he must tarry a parliament, that such offenders might be punished by judgment of their peers.' And so for that time he was dismissed with great signs of love and fatherly affection. Thus were the father and the son reconciled, betwixt whom the said pickthanks had sown division, insomuch that the son, upon a vehement concert of unkindness sprung up in the father, was in the way to be worn out of favour, which was the more likely to come to pass by their informations that *privily charged him with riot and other uncivil demeanour unseemly for a prince ; indeed, he was youthfully given, grown to audacity, and had chosen him companions agreeable to his age, with whom he spent* his time in such recreations, exercises, and delights as he fancied. But yet it should seem, by the report of

some writers, that *his behaviour was not offensive, or at least tending to the damage of anybody; sith he had a care to avoid doing of wrong, and to tender his affections within the tract of virtue,* whereby he opened unto himself a ready passage of good liking among the prudent sort, and was beloved of such as could discern his disposition, which was in no degree so excessive as that he deserved in such vehement manner to be suspected."

The conference between father and son is interrupted by news of the rising of the Percies brought from the Scottish Lord March;* whereupon the King assigns to his several sons, not excluding Henry, their respective times and lines of march. In fact, young Henry was at this very time in the field, and had not been in London for a considerable time.

The fourth act introduces Douglas in person. Shakspeare makes him a little boastful:—

> "No man so potent breathes upon the ground,
> But I will beard him."

In history he is only brave and unfortunate.

The absence of the elder Percy is according to history:—

> "His uncle dear was with him there 'deed,
> His father came not out of Northumberland,

* By a confusion he is called in the play Lord *Mortimer* of Scotland. He was George Dunbar, tenth Earl of Dunbar and March, who had expatriated himself from Scotland and joined Henry the Fourth.

But failed him foul without witte or rede.
But to the King he came I understand,
Whereby submitting him unto his royal hand,
Whom then he put to hold in sore prison,
With two men of his own, in Bagington."*

There was perhaps some ground for the doubt about Northumberland's motives which Worcester suggests.

"It will be thought,
By some that know not why he is away,
That wisdom, loyalty, and mere dislike
Of our proceedings, kept the earl from hence."

It is consistent with the sanguine and fearless character of Hotspur to answer—

"I rather of his absence make this use;—
It lends a lustre and more great opinion,
A larger dare, to our great enterprise,
Than if the earl were here; for men must think
If we, without his help, can make a head
To push against the kingdom, with his help
We shall o'erturn it topsy-turvy down."

Glendower was also absent, but was busily engaged in his country.† Douglas says of him—

archbishop

"And comes not in, *o'erruled by prophecies*."

I do not find in the usual works Shakspeare's authority for this cause of the Welshman's absence; but it is in good keeping.

* Hardyng, p. 361. † Tyler, p. 167.

In this scene, Sir Richard Vernon* brings an account of Prince Henry and his companions, which is worthy of notice in several respects:—

"*Hotspur*. . . . . Where is his son,
The nimble-footed † mad-cap Prince of Wales,
And his comrades, that daff'd the world aside,
And bid it pass?

"*Vernon*. All furnish'd, all in arms,
All plumed like estridges that wing the wind;
Bated like eagles having lately bathed;
Glittering in golden coats, like images;
As full of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer;
Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls."

This is a description of the chosen companions of the prince; if it stood alone, I should say without doubt that Shakspeare did *not* intend to place him in low company, but the balance of evidence is the other way, and the poet must have here forgotten himself; for he surely did not liken Falstaff to the ostridge or the eagle, or Bardolph to the month of

* I suppose that this Vernon is Sir Richard of Haddon (ancestor of Lord Vernon). His successor is said to have died about 1425; his own death is not mentioned by Collins (vii. 399), perhaps because he died by the hands of the executioner.

† Steevens quotes from Stow (p. 342), the mention of Henry's great swiftness of foot. Bosw., 359. It is also mentioned by Elmham, p. 12.

May. I believe the description to be true to history, and Henry to have been (though not at this time) surrounded by smart, brave, gay, and perhaps dissolute young men. It would be wrong to omit the decription of their leader, though often quoted :—

" I saw young Harry—with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly armed—
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,
As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds,
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with noble horsemanship."

We are now brought to the " rebel camp near Shrewsbury,"* when Hotspur, with his characteristic ardour, proposes an immediate attack upon the king ; who, while the insurgents are in deliberation, sends Sir Walter Blunt† with " gracious offers." The poet has substituted Blunt (who, however, was present with the king's force) for " the Abbot of Shrewsbury, and one of the clerks of the privy seal,"‡ who carried " offers of pardon, if they would come to any reasonable agreement." This scene, and the first and second of the fifth act, are chiefly occupied with the discussion of these offers.

* Act iv. Sc. 3.

† The ancestor of Mr. Blount, of Mapledurham in Oxfordshire. See Burke's Commoners, iii. 165.

‡ Hol., 25 ; Wals. 368.

The enumeration of grievances is taken from a slight notice in Holinshed,* and former occurrences noted in those plays, and Shakspeare has copied the error of the Chronicler in respect of the Mortimers. The gravamen of the charge against Henry, in the speeches of the Percies, is that he treated their house with ingratitude; that having sworn that he only came for his own inheritance, he deposed and *murdered Richard*,† and seized the crown; and that he refused to ransom Mortimer, alleging that he had treacherously given himself up.

"*Hotspur*. The king is kind, and well we know,
the king
Knows at what time to promise, when to pay.
My father, my uncle, and myself,
Did give him that same royalty he wears:
And, when he was not six-and-twenty strong,
Sick in the world's regard, wretched and low,
A poor unminded outlaw, sneaking home,—
My father gave him welcome to the shore:
And,—when he heard him swear and vow to God,

* P. 23, 25,—Hall (p. 29). gives a manifesto at length, and Hardying, (p. 353,) one which the Editor, Sir Henry Ellis, believes to be more accurate; but Tyler (i. 163) deems this a forgery. I am not prepared with an opinion, but believe that Shakspeare saw neither one of the documents.

† Walsingham says (p. 368) that the rebels reported that Richard was alive; and Mortimer's letter (noticed in p. 92) refers to the possibility of his being so. This inconsistency is certainly in favour of Tyler's opinion

He came but to be duke of Lancaster,
To sue his livery, and beg his peace;
With tears of innocency, and terms of zeal,—
My father, in kind heart and pity mov'd,
Swore him assistance and perform'd it too.
Now, when the lords, and barons of the realm,
Perceived Northumberland did lean to him,
The more and less came in with cap and knee;
Met him in boroughs, cities, villages;
Attended him on bridges, stood in lanes,
Laid gifts before him, proffer'd him their oaths,
Gave him their heirs; as pages follow'd him,
Even at the heels in golden multitudes.
He presently,—as greatness knows itself,—
Steps me a little higher than his vow
Made to my father, while his blood was poor,
Upon the naked shore at Ravenspurg;
And now, forsooth, takes on him to reform
Some certain edicts, and some strait decrees,
That lay too heavy on the commonwealth:
Cries out upon abuses, seems to weep
Over his country's wrongs; and by this face
This seeming brow of justice, did he win,
The hearts of all that he did angle for.
Proceeded further; cut me off the heads,
Of all the favorites, that the absent king
In deputation left behind him here,
When he was personal in the Irish war.
In short time after, he deposed the king;
Soon after that, deprived him of his life,

And in the neck of that, task'd the whole state:
To make that worse, suffered his kinsman March
(Who is, if every owner were well plac'd,
Indeed his king,) to be incaged in Wales,
There without ransom, to lie forfeited:
Disgrac'd me in my happy victories;
Sought to entrap me by intelligence;
Rated my uncle from the council board,
In rage dismiss'd my father from the court;
Broke oath on oath, committed wrong on wrong;
And in conclusion, drove us to seek out,
This head of safety; and withal to pry
Into his title, the which we find,
Too indirect for long continuance.

Worcester repeats the same grievances in the presence of the king.

"It pleas'd your majesty to turn your looks
Of favour from myself, and all our house;
And yet I must remember you, my lord,
We were the first and dearest of your friends.

After referring to the claim to the duchy, in which only, it is again pretended, the Percies undertook to assist Henry,—

"———But, in short space,
It rain'd down fortune, showering on your head;
And such a flood of greatness fell on you,—
What with our help, what with the absent king,
What with the injuries of a wanton time,
The seeming sufferances that you had borne;

And the contrarious winds, that held the king
So long in his unlucky Irish wars,
That all in England did repute him dead,—
And from this swarm of fair advantages,
You took occasion to be quickly woo'd—
To gripe the general sway into your hand:
Forgot your oath to us at Doncaster,
And being fed by us, you us'd us so,
As that ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird,
Useth the sparrow," &c.

The Chronicle is closely followed in sending Worcester to the king, at the suggestion of Hotspur, who apparently had the command. And it is also from Holinshed that Shakspeare takes the repetition of "the liberal kind offers of the king,"* who "had condescended to all that was reasonable at his hands to be required, and seemed to humble himself more than was meet for his estate;"† and so, also, of the concealment of those offers from Hotspur: but the reason is supplied by Shakspeare, who makes Worcester calculate that the king would forgive the younger Percy, but wreak his vengeance upon the father and uncle.

The prince's offer of a single combat with Hotspur is imagined by Shakspeare, as well as Hotspur's contemptuous allusion to the follies of his supposed rival. All this is in good keeping with the rest

* Act v. Sc. 2. † Hol. 25.

of the play, but in utter defiance of history. That Henry was as modest as Vernon describes him is very probable, but he could not say without absurdity—

"I may speak it to my shame,
I have a truant been to chivalry."

Percy's war-cry and exhortation are from the Chronicle:—*

"The Lord Percy, as a captain of high courage, began to exhort the captains and soldiers to prepare themselves for battle, since the matter was grown to that point, that by no means it could be avoided, so that (said he) this day shall either bring us all to advancement and honour, or else, if it shall chance us to be overcome, shall deliver us from the king's spiteful malice and cruel disdain; for playing the men, as we ought to do, better it is to die in battle, for the commonwealth's cause, than through coward-like fear, to prolong life, which shall afterwards be taken from us by the sentence of the enemy.....The king's party crying St. George upon them; the adversaries cried Espérance,† Percy."

"Oh, gentlemen, the time of life is short;
To spend that shortness basely were too long,
If life did ride upon a dial's point.
Still ending at the arrival of an hour.
And *if we live, we live to tread on kings;*
If die, brave death, when princes die with us!

* Hol., xxiv. 25.

† "Espérance en Dieu" is still the motto of the Percies, or rather, of those who represent them.

Now for our conscience,—the arms are fair,
When the intent of bearing them is just."

* * * * *

"Now—Espérance!—Percy!— and set on!"

If it should be observed that the language which Shakspeare puts in the mouth of Hotspur, though evidently suggested by Holinshed,* savours more than its original of opposition to kings *as kings*, it should be remembered, also, that this rebel chief is overcome and slain, and his companions beheaded.

"Thus ever did rebellion find rebuke."

The incidents of the battle of Shrewsbury are in part warranted by the Chronicle, in part imaginary. Among the latter is the slaying of Hotspur by the prince himself, which, if not gratuitously invented by the poet for improving his plot, may have originated in a mis-reading of one chronicler by another. Among the former are the killing of the king's likenesses, and the gallant bearing of Henry, who, although wounded, refused to quit the field. His personal rescue of his father has no foundation but the words of Holinshed:‡—"The

* P. 24; and see Wals., 368.

† Hall (p. 31), after mentioning the gallant deeds of the king, says that the *other of his part* fought valiantly and slew the Lord Percy. Holinshed (p. 26) ascribes the same prowess to *the other on his part*, as referring to *one* person: the prince having been lately mentioned, Shakspeare may have applied the designation to him. ‡ P. 26.

prince that day holp his father like a lusty young gentleman." But the older Chronicles, though they do not mention these specific instances of valour, concur in reporting the gallant conduct of the prince.

And they all mention the wound in the face of which Shakspeare's Henry says—

"I do not need your help:
And heaven forbid a shallow scratch should drive
The Prince of Wales from such a field as this,
Where stain'd nobility lies trodden on,
And rebels' arms triumph in massacres!"

Elmham gives a speech which might have been dramatised with good effect:—"Let me not say to my companions, Go you first to the fight; but rather let it be mine to say, When in front of the enemy, my friends, follow me your leader." *

In enumerating his loss, the king says—

"Three knights upon our party slain to-day,
A noble earl, and many a creature else." †

The earl is Stafford; ‡ of the knights, two are, Blunt, of whom we have heard already, and Sir John Shirley; but, besides these, Holinshed mentions Sir John Clifton, and Sir Nicholas Gansell

* Elmham, p. 7; Tyler, i. 175. † Act v. Sc. 5.

‡ Edmund Stafford, fifth earl, descended from a Bagot, who married the heiress of Stafford. This earl married the daughter of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester. The present Viscount Stafford represents the family through females. Banks, ii. 519; Nicolas, ii. 598.

(also noticed by Shakspeare, but not as killed), Sir John Cockayne,* Sir John Calverley, Sir John Massie, Sir Hugh Mortimer, Sir Thomas Wendesley. These names are found in Otterbourne.† The prince had said previously—

> "The spirits
> Of Shirley, Stafford, Blunt, are in my arms."

Holinshed is followed as to Douglas:—

> "The noble Scot, Lord Douglas, when he saw
> The fortune of the day quite turn'd from him,
> The noble Percy slain, and all his men
> Upon the foot of fear,—fled with the rest;
> And, falling from a hill, he was so bruised
> That the pursuers took him."

I know that it is said somewhere that the Scots, naturally taking little interest in the contest, did not put forth their strength; but I have no disposition whatever to deny to Mr. Campbell, that it was not until the field was lost that the Douglas fled.

It is for dramatic effect that the liberation of Douglas is made the act of the Prince of Wales.

The play ends with the disposition of force made by the king; Westmoreland was to march against Northumberland, and the king himself, with his eldest son, against Glendower. This is correct, except that the king himself also went northward.

* Ancestor, I suppose, of the late Viscount Cullen.

† P. 244.

HENRY IV.—PART II.

THE Second Part of "Henry the Fourth" commences with a scene which was in my time familiar to play-goers, though not as part of this play; Colley Cibber adopted parts of it into his irreverent alteration of Shakspeare's "Richard the Third," where the doubts and lamentations of Northumberland, on hearing the various accounts of the battle of Shrewsbury, are transferred to Henry the Sixth, and the battle of Tewksbury.

One passage of this interesting scene is given to Gloucester himself; and it must be owned that the following lines are more appropriate to the dying Richard, than the irresolute Earl of the north.

"Let heaven kiss earth! Now let not nature's hand
Keep the white flood confined! Let order die!
And let this world no longer be a stage,
To feed contention in a lingering act;
But let one spirit of the first-born Cain
Reign in all bosoms, that, each heart being set
On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,
And darkness be the burier of the dead!"

According to Shakspeare, Northumberland, who had been *crafty-sick*,* while his heroic son was fighting, is now persuaded by his friends† to renew the rebellious war, and he is encouraged by the information, that—

> "The gentle Archbishop of York is up
> With well-appointed powers."

The epithet here applied to the warlike prelate might perhaps remind one of the way in which the "Gradus ad Parnassum" was sometimes used at school, when a boy, finding *magnanimus* among the epithets of *dux*, or *timida* among those of *puella*, would think himself justified in thus illustrating the names of his hero and heroine, though the one might be a coward and the other an Amazon.

"The archbishop, coming forth among them *clad in armour*, encouraged, exhorted, and, by all means he could, pricked them forth to undertake the enterprize in hand, and manfully to continue in their begun purpose, promising forgiveness of sins to all them whose hap it was to die in the quarrel." ‡

But Shakspeare had nevertheless better grounds

* Induction to the Second Part of "Henry the Fourth."

† Principally Lord Bardolph. William Phelip, who married the heiress of the ancient Bardolphs, and got the title. Banks, ii. 29. He was Lieutenant of Calais.

‡ Hol., iii. 36, from Wals., 373.

for his epithet, in the passage which Holinshed adds:—

"Indeed the respect that men had to the archbishop caused them to like the better of the cause, since the gravity of his age, his integrity of life, and incomparable learning, with the reverend aspect of his amiable personage, moved all men to have him in no small estimation."

This prelate was Richard Scrope,

"who bore hard
His brother's death at Bristol, the Lord Scroop,"

who had been put to death by King Henry.*

But Northumberland did not at this time rise against the king. Shakspeare might have learned from his usual authorities that the earl, whether summoned or "of his own free will," came to the king; some say that Henry "gave him fair words," others that he committed him to safe custody; but all agree that Northumberland was quiet for a time; and in the parliament of 1404 he was restored to most of his dignities.† No one of the

* See p. 54; and Bosw., xvi. 229, xvii. 149. Sir H. Nicolas (Scrope and Grosvenor Roll ii. 59, 121, 135) says, that the archbishop was not the brother of Wiltshire, but was a Scrope of Masham. Shakspeare copies Hall; neither Walsingham, nor Hardyng, nor Holinshed, nor Stow, agrees with Hall.

† Hol., 26, 27. It is not stated how he was deprived of

Chroniclers describes what took place in parliament.

"On the 18th of February, the Earl of Northumberland came before the king and lords, and there, by his petition to the king, acknowledged to have acted against his allegiance, namely, for *gathering of forces* and giving liberties, for which he craved pardon; and the rather, for that on the king's letters he yielded himself, and came to the king at York, whereas he might have kept himself away. The king delivered this petition to the judges, to be by them considered; but the lords made protestation against it, and that the ordering thereof belonged to themselves. Accordingly they, as peers of parliament, to whom only such judgment belonged, in considering well the statute of the 25 Edw. III., touching treasons, and the statute of liveries made in this king's time,* adjudged the earl's crime to be no treason nor felony, but only a trespass finable to the king. For which judgment the said earl gave great thanks to the king and lords, and at his own request he was sworn to be a true liegeman to the king, to the prince, and to the heirs of his body begotten, and to every of the king's sons and to their issue succeeding to the crown of

them. See also Hall, 32; and Stow, 329; Tyler, i. 181; Wals., 369; Hard., 362.

* There were two, 1 Hen. IV. c. 7; and 2 Hen. IV. c. 21; which, for the maintenance of peace, restrained noblemen from giving liveries or badge to knights, esquires, or others.

England according to law: that done, the king pardoned the said earl his fine and ransom.*

This is not the place for legal discussions; but surely this judgment of the lords, that Northumberland's offence did not amount to "levying war against the king," must have been obtained by his influence among his peers, many of whom were probably as ill affected as he was to the king. Probably the judges were superseded, that the law might be strained.†

The conspirators are now introduced‡ in deliberation at the palace of the archbishop. Northumland was still absent, and Bardolph, who appears to have been closely connected with him, and who, in fact, was not concerned in the present outbreak, is properly made doubtful of the prudence of rising

* Parl. Hist., i. 290; which is warranted by the Rolls, iii. 524; in 5 Hen. IV.

† I was not aware of this case when I made an observation on the statute of treasons, in Lardner's British Statesmen, vol. v. 203. I take this to have been a proceeding under that statute.

‡ Hastings and Mowbray are mentioned by Holinshed. Edward Hastings, of the family of Hastings, Lords Hastings and Earls of Pembroke; but never, as it is said, summoned as a peer. Banks, i. 338. Thomas Mowbray was son and heir of the banished Norfolk. In 1405 he had been accused of a concern in taking away the son of the Earl of March from Windsor. Hol., 33.

without him; but the warlike counsels of the prelate prevailed. I give a part of what Pope calls his "excellent speech," the former part being unfit for insertion.*

"What trust is in these times?
They, that when Richard lived would have him die,
Are now become enamour'd on his grave:
Thou, that threw'st dust upon his goodly head,
When through proud London he came sighing on,
After the admired heels of Bolingbroke,
Cry'st now, '*O Earth, yield us that king again,*
And take thou this!' O thoughts of men accurst!
Past, and to come, seem best; things present, worst."

And Hastings urged that the king's forces—

"Are in three heads; one power against the French,
And one against Glendower."

This is correct; the contest with Wales still went on, and a force was about this time sent to Calais, under Prince Thomas;† Henry was still at war with the French, who had assisted Owen Glendower.

* The commentators have noticed a mistake of the poet in styling Prince John, *Duke* of Lancaster. He had not that title until after the accession of Henry the Fifth. Bosw., 44.

† I know not why Hastings says that he knew not who commanded this force.

The scene* between Northumberland, his wife,† and daughter-in-law, is Shakspeare's creature, and of fair proportions. But the earl did now determine, as Shakspeare relates, to return into Scotland; he gave way to the solicitations of the females of his family, and, instead of joining the rebel force, betook himself to Wales. The reasoning of Lady Percy,‡ plausible though fallacious, might well have prevailed with one of stouter heart. I will give only her apostrophe to her dead husband.

"By his light
Did all the chivalry of England move
To do brave acts. He was indeed the glass
Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves.
He had no legs, that practised not his gait;
And speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,
Became the accents of the valiant;
For those that could speak low and tardily
Would turn their own perfection to abuse,
To seem like him: so that in speech, in gait,
In diet, in affections of delight,

* Act ii. Sc. 3.

† This was his second wife, Maude, sister and heir of Anthony, Lord Lucy, and widow of Gilbert Umfraville, Earl of Angus. Hotspur's mother was Margaret, daughter of Ralph, Lord Neville of Raby. Collins, ii. 265.

‡ October 8th, 1403, after the battle of Shrewsbury, a warrant was issued for the apprehending this lady, on what ground I know not; see Tyler, i. 248.

In military rules, humours of blood,
He was the mark and glass, copy and book,
That fashion'd others. And him—O wondrous him!
O miracle of men!—him did you leave
(Second to none, unseconded by you),
To look upon the hideous god of war
In disadvantage; to abide a field
Where nothing but the sound of Hotspur's name
Did seem defensible;—so you left him:
Never, O never, do his ghost the wrong,
To hold your honour more precise and nice
With others than with him."

Of the celebrated address to sleep,* Shakspeare has the whole merit.

" How many thousand of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep! Sleep, gentle sleep,
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,
That thou no more will weigh my eyelids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?
Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,
Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lulled with sounds of sweetest melody?
O, thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile
In loathsome beds, and leav'st the kingly couch,

* Act iii. Sc. 1.

A watch-case, or a common 'larum bell?
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge;
And in the visitation of the winds,
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
Curling their monstrous heads and hanging them
With deaf'ning clamours in the slippery clouds,
That with the hurly death itself awakes?
Can'st thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;
And in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a king? Then, happy low, lie down,
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

Surry* and Warwick† are historical persons, likely to be with the king. The mention of Glendower's death is a mistake taken from Holinshed; he lived till 1415.‡

A passage in this scene exhibits Shakspeare's carelessness as to facts and circumstances, even those which he had recorded or invented. In referring to Richard's prediction of Northumberland's defec-

* Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel and Surry. Banks, ii. 693.

† Richard de Beauchamp; Shakspeare invariably styles him Neville. (Bosw. iii.) The title afterwards, as we shall see, came to that family by marriage. Banks, iii. 722.

‡ See Bosw., xvi. 310; and xvii. 113.

tion from Henry, who *ascended the throne* with his help, the king now says—

"Though then, Heaven knows, I had no such intent."

Malone observes, correctly, that Richard's speech was made after Henry had already accepted the crown.*

The scene in Gualtree forest,† where the archbishop pitched his rebellious camp, unaccompanied by Northumberland, and Westmoreland, "subtilely devised how to quail his purpose," is taken from Holinshed,‡ who yet is not exactly followed as to the proceedings of the northern earl. Shakspeare's archbishop imputes to him irresolution, if not perfidy—

"I have received
New-dated letters from Northumberland;
Their cold intent, tenour, and purpose, thus:—
Here doth he wish his person with such powers,
As might hold sortance with his quality;
The which he could not levy, whereupon
He is retired, to ripe his growing fortunes
To Scotland."

The Chronicles rather impute "too much haste" to the archbishops, whose separate force was over-

* See Bosw., iii. Johnson notices another piece of carelessness. Warwick was *not* present on the occasion; see Richard II. Act v. Sc. 2.

† Act iv. Sc. 1.

‡ P. 37 See Hall, 34; Stow, 332; Otterb. 254.

come before that of Northumberland had been brought into the field. The earl retired into Scotland, when, after the affair of Gualtree, the king marched against him with a superior force.

Westmoreland's demand of the reason of the archbishop's armament is put by the poet into appropriate language; for the answer of the prelate, Shakspeare had not only to draw upon his imagination :—

" The archbishop answered that he took nothing in hand against the king's peace, but that whatsoever he did tended rather to advance the peace and quiet of the commonwealth than otherwise; and where he and his company were in arms, it was for fear of the king, to whom he could have no free access, by reason of such a multitude of flatterers as were about him; and, therefore, he maintained that his purpose to be good and profitable, as well for the king himself as for the realm, if men were willing to understand a truth; and, herewith, he showed forth a scroll in which the articles were written, of which you have heard."

Thus paraphrased and enlarged :—

" Nor do I, as an enemy to peace,
Troop in the throngs of military men;
But rather show awhile like fearful war,
To diet rank minds, sick of happiness,
And purge the obstructions which begin to stop
Our very veins of life. Hear me more plainly.

I have in equal balance justly weigh'd
What wrongs our arms may do, what wrongs we
suffer,
And find our griefs heavier than our offences.
We see which way the stream of time doth run,
And are enforced from our most quiet sphere
By the rough torrent of occasion;
And have the summary of all our griefs,
When time shall serve, to show in *articles*,
Which, long ere this, we offer'd to the king,
And might by no suit gain our audience:
When we are wrong'd, and would unfold our griefs,
We are denied access unto his person,
Even by those men that most have done us wrong.
The dangers of the days but newly gone,
(Whose memory is written on the earth
With yet appearing blood,) and the examples
Of every minute's instance (present now),
Have put us in these ill-beseeming arms;
Not to break peace, or any branch of it,
But to establish here a peace indeed,
Concurring both in name and quality."

Shakspeare has made a better case for the insurgents than history warrants; for we are told that their complaints were communicated to the nobility, and even "set up in the public streets of the city of York;"* but not that they were offered to

* Hol. 36.

the king, or that the insurrection was occasioned by the rejection or neglect of them.

The articles* themselves were not seen by Shakspeare, for they are not in any book to which he resorted; nor are they in the older Chronicles upon which those books were founded. It is, therefore, unnecessary to say more of them than that they set forth the deposition and *murder* of Richard† by Henry, and the new king's oppression of clergy and people. This document, in fact, raised a mortal quarrel, not susceptible of settlement at a peaceful audience.

Shakspeare, however, has still the authority of Holinshed for Westmoreland's mode of putting down the insurrection.

"When he had read the articles, he showed in word and countenance outwardly that he liked of the archbishop's holy and virtuous intent and purpose, promising that he and his would prosecute the same in assisting the archbishop,‡ who, rejoicing thereat, gave credit to the earl, and persuaded the earl marshal (against his will, as it were) to go with him to a place appointed for them to commune together. Here, when they were met

* Lingard doubts whether the archbishop was a party to these articles, iv. 404. See them in Anglia Sacra, ii. 362.

† Yet some time afterwards, it is said, the malcontents made use of a report that Richard still lived. Hol. 43. But I do not find this in Walsingham or Otterbourne.

‡ This is from Walsingham, 373.

with a like number on either part, the articles were read over, and, without any more ado, the Earl of Westmoreland, and those that were with him, agreed to do their best to see that a reformation might be had according to the same. The Earl of Westmoreland, *using more policy than the rest*, 'Well,' said he, 'then our travail is come to the wished end, and where our people have been long in armour, let them depart home to their wonted trades and occupations; in the mean time, let us drink together in sign of agreement, that the people on both sides may see it, and know that it is true that we have light upon a point.' They had no sooner shaken hands together, but that a knight was sent straightways from the archbishop, to bring word to the people that there was peace concluded, commanding each man to lay aside his arms, and to resort home to their houses. The people, beholding such tokens of peace as shaking of hands and drinking together of the lords in loving manner, they being already wearied with the unaccustomed travel of war, brake up their field, and returned homewards; but, in the mean time, whilst the people of the archbishop's side withdrew away, the number of the contrary party increased, according to order given by the Earl of Westmoreland, and yet the archbishop perceived not that he was deceived, until the Earl of Westmoreland arrested both him and the earl marshal, with divers others."

In the play, the words which misled the insurgents are put into the mouth of Prince John.

"*Westm.* Pleaseth your grace to answer them directly,
How far-forth you do like their articles?
"*P. John.* I like them all, and do allow them well;
And swear here, by the honour of my blood,
My father's purposes have been mistook;
And some about him have too lavishly
Wrested his meaning and authority.—
My lord, these griefs shall be with speed redressed;
Upon my soul they shall. If this may please you,
Discharge your powers into their several counties,
As we will ours; and here, between the armies,
Let's drink together friendly, and embrace,
That all their eyes may bear these tokens home
Of our restored love and amity."

Probably, no man ever read the remainder of this scene without disgust at the perfidy and equivocation of the prince, who, having kept up his own force while the other was dispersed, arrested the rebel leaders, alleging that he had engaged to redress their grievances, but not to respect their persons.

Shakspeare has been blamed by "the great moralist" for not expressing his "indignation at this horrid violation of faith."* Malone observes truly that he merely followed the historians, and surely this is a justification, though the commentator thinks it not so, because "it is the duty of a

* Johnson, in Bosw., 164.

poet always to take the side of virtue." It was not Shakspeare's business to make moral reflections, nor was there a person in the drama to whom he could have assigned them; he might, perhaps, have put a more energetic and indignant remonstrance in the mouth of the injured prelate.

In another version of the story,* the king's generals persuade the rebel leaders to surrender unconditionally, thereupon their troops disperse themselves.

Nothing seems clear but that the archbishop, Mowbray, and the others, fell into the hands of the king without any action fought, and that they were put to death; not, however, as Shakspeare says,† by the authority of Prince John, but by that of one of the king's judges. The Chief Justice Gascoyne, it is said,‡ refused to condemn a bishop; but one Fulthorpe, or Fulford,§ was made a judge for the occasion, and condemned

* Otterb., 255. Hol. refers also to this.

† Act iv. Sc. 4.

‡ June 8, 1405. Clement, at Maidstone, in Anglia Sacra, i. 369; Tyler, i. 209.

§ Clement calls him Fulthorpe; but Godwin (p. 690), though he writes on Clement's authority, gives the name Fulford; and I know that the amiable family of Great Fulford, in Devonshire, considers the questionable honour as belonging to that ancient house, (Burke's Commoners, iii. 158). But I believe, with Lysons (Devon. p. 171), that this is a mistake. No judge of either name was *summoned* in his reign. Thomas Fulthorpe was summoned in 13 Hen.

Scrope, who was beheaded without a trial,* protesting loudly that he had intended no evil against the king. His admirers have not failed to describe the miracles which followed his death.

Shakspeare makes a scene† of the surrender of Coleville of the Dale, one of the rebel leaders, to Sir John Falstaff. Holinshed says that Coleville, with Lord Hastings, was convicted and beheaded; I know not how Shakspeare got hold of the fact, which is recorded, of his being made prisoner after the dispersion of the rebel force.

At the same time with the report of the archbishop's execution, the Henry of the play receives information that

> "The Earl Northumberland and the Lord Bardolph,
> With a great power of English and of Scots,
> Are by the sheriff of Yorkshire overthrown."

VI.—Dugd. 426. It is said that, when the Pope took up the cause of Scrope, as a son of the church, Henry sent the prelate's armour to Rome, asking "whether that was his son's coat?"

* There was a sort of trial *after his death.* When the king, in parliament, desired the temporal peers to declare the archbishop and the earl traitors, they replied that, according to the representation given by Prince John, their offence seemed to be treason; but, in order that there might be no error, they desired that the case should be submitted to another parliament, to which all peers should be summoned. See Lingard, iv. 305; and Rolls, iii. 606.

† Act iv. Sc. 3.

But, in fact, these two northern peers, as Shakspeare might have known from Holinshed,* did not come into actual contact with the king's forces until three years afterwards. In the interval, they were in Wales, France, and Flanders, and latterly in Scotland, from whence they invaded England, and were defeated at Bramham Moor, in March 1408, by the Rokeby of whom we have heard. Northumberland was slain in the fight, and Bardolph died of his wounds. Shakspeare commits a double anachronism in assigning the discomfiture and death of Scrope and of Northumberland to the same year, and in placing both events at the close of Henry's life, which, in fact, the latter of them preceded by five years.†

Though his dates are wrong, and, consequently, Henry's reflections in the following lines are misplaced—

"Will Fortune never come with both hands full,
But write her fair words still in foulest letters?
She either gives a stomach and no food—
Such are the poor, in health; or else, a feast,

* P. 44. Hard., 364. Wals., 377. Otterb., 261.

† I do not know why the dramatist selected *Harcourt* as the bearer of the news of Rokeby's success. The Harcourts were considerable persons in this reign, and I apprehend that Shakspeare took the name at random. I cannot identify any particular member of the family as the person intended.—See Collins, iv. 435. The Harcourts are now represented in the female line by the Vernons.

And takes away the stomach—such are the rich
That have abundance and enjoy it not:"—

such enjoyment as his throne, now unassailed by rebels, could give to Henry, he continued to possess for five years, before he was seized with the "apoplex" which terminated his life.

The prodigies which preceded the king's death—

"*Clarence*. The river hath thrice flow'd, no ebb between,"

are not imagined by Shakspeare; for Holinshed writes—

"In this year (1412), and upon the 12th day of October, were three floods in the Thames, the one following upon the other, and no ebbing between, *which thing no man living could remember the like to be seen.*"*

This is probable, but Shakspeare adds, I know not upon what authority—†

"And the old folk, time's doting chronicles,
Say it did so a little time before
That our great grandsire Edward sick'd and died."

I now return to the Prince of Wales. In a former scene,‡ Falstaff's page, on the appearance of the chief justice, observes—

"Sir, here comes the nobleman that committed the prince for *striking* him about Bardolph."

* Hol., 55.
† There is nothing of this tide in Hall or Stow.
‡ Act i. Sc. 2.

And in one, to which we shall come presently, the prince alludes to the same popular story :—

"What! rate, rebuke, and roughly send to prison,
The immediate heir of England! Was this easy?
May this be wash'd in Lethe and forgotten?"

The chief justice, in his answer, says to the prince,

"You struck me in my very seat of judgment."

And young Henry then repeats the speech of Henry the Fourth when informed of the occurrence—

"Happy am I that have a man so bold,
That dares do justice on my proper son;
And no less happy having such a son,
That would deliver up his greatness so
Into the hands of justice."

Shakspeare's authorities were Stow, Holinshed, and probably the old play.

"It happened," we are told by Stow, "that one of his servants, whom he favoured, was for felony by him committed, arraigned at the King's Bench, whereof the prince being advertised, and incensed by light persons about him, in furious rage came hastily to the bar where his servant stood as prisoner, and commanded him to be ungived and set at liberty; whereat all men were abashed, *reserved** the chief justice,† who humbly exhorted the prince to be ordered according to the ancient

* A remarkable instance of the use of the participle as an adverb.

† Sir William Gascoigne. Tyler, i. 371.

laws of the realm, or, if he would have him saved from the rigour of the laws, that he should obtain if he might of the king his father his gracious pardon, whereby no law or justice should be derogated. With which answer the prince, nothing appeased, but rather more inflamed, endeavoured himself to take away his servant. The judge, considering the perilous example and great inconveniency that might thereby ensue, with a valiant spirit and courage commanded the prince upon his allegiance to leave the prisoner, and to depart his way; with which commandment, the prince being set all in a fury, all chafed, and in a terrible manner came up to the place of judgment, men thinking that he would have slain the judge or have done to him some damage; but the judge, sitting still without moving, declaring the majesty of the king's place of judgment, and, with an assured bold countenance, said to the prince these words following:—'Sir, remember yourself; I keep here the place of the king your sovereign lord and father, to whom you owe double obesiance, wherefore eftsoones in his name I charge you desist off your wilfulness and unlawful enterprise, and from henceforth give good example to those who shall be your subjects; and now, for your contempt and disobedience, go you to the prison of the King's Bench, whereunto I commit you, and remain you there prisoner until the pleasure of the king your father be further known.' With which words, being abashed, and also wondering at the marvellous gravity of that worshipful justice, the prince, laying his weapon apart, doing reverence, went to the King's

Bench as he was commanded. Whereat his servants disclaiming came and showed to the king all the whole affair; whereat he, after a while studying, after as a man all ravished with gladness, holding his hands and eyes towards heaven, abraid,* with a loud voice, "O merciful God! how much am I bounded to thy infinite goodness, especially for that thou hast given me a judge who feareth not to administer justice, and also a son who can suffer semblably and obey justice."†

From this passage, which is copied with great exactness from Sir Thomas Elyot's "Governor," Shakspeare takes the speech of Henry the Fourth; in that which is, in fact, the oldest, and apparently the *only*, authority for the tale, *there is no mention of a blow;* but the dramatist has supplied this important incident from Holinshed,‡ or very likely from "The famous victories of Henry the Fifth,"§ in which the box on the ear is enacted on the stage.

Luders and Tyler both throw great doubts upon the whole story, and certainly a book written after the lapse of more than a century, for Elyot's work was published in 1531, and dedicated to Henry the Eighth, is quite insufficient to establish such a fact. Yet I suspect that there was a tradition, probably not altogether unfounded, for some

* Cried out. † Stow, 342.

‡ P. 61; and Hall, 46. See Malone in Bosw. 245.

§ P. 333. Sir Edward Coke, in his third institute, refers to the blow as an acknowledged fact. Lud., p. 67-75.

attempted interference with the course of justice, and the consequent committal of the prince.* But the blow may assuredly be discarded ; had Elyot, the original relator, believed in this degree of outrage, he would not have characterized the story as one of "a good judge, a good prince, and a good king."

Shakspeare also takes from Stow the injunctions of the king that the two princes, Henry and Thomas of Clarence, should live well together. But the annalist and the poet do not agree. In Stow the king says to his eldest son—

"I fear me sore, after my departure form this life, some discord shall grow and arise between thee and my brother Thomas Duke of Clarence, whereby the realm may be brought to destruction and misery, for I know you both to be of great stomach and courage. Wherefore I fear that he through his high mind will make some enterprise against thee, intending to usurp upon thee, which I know thy stomach may not abide easily."

In the play,† the injunction is given to Thomas of Clarence, and the apprehension expressed is of

* Sir Harris Nicolas has pointed out a record, from which it appears that Edward II., when heir apparent, was banished from his father's presence for half a year, for using gross and bitter words to one of the king's ministers, and from the context it would rather appear that this minister was a judge, and the insult committed in the Court.—See *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, *p.* 256.

† Act iv. Sc. 4.

differences between Prince Henry and his "*other* brethren," between whom and the Prince of Wales Clarence was to mediate.

"How chance thou art not with the prince thy brother?
He loves thee, and thou dost neglect him, Thomas;
Thou hast a better place in his affection
Than all thy brothers: cherish it, my boy;
And noble offices thou may'st effect
Of mediation, after I am dead,
Between his greatness and thy other brethren:
Therefore omit him not; blunt not his love;
Nor lose the good advantage of his grace,
By seeming cold, or careless of his will."

And then follows a passage which must satisfy us that Shakspeare intended to represent "Madcap Harry" as adorned with many good qualities:—

"For he is gracious, if he be observed:
He hath a tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity;
Yet, notwithstanding, being incensed, he's flint:
As humorous as winter, and as sudden
As flaws congealed in the spring of day.
His temper, therefore, must be well observed:
Chide him for faults, and do it reverently,
When you perceive his blood inclined to mirth:
But, being moody, give him line and scope,
Till that his passions, like a whale on ground,
Confound themselves with working."

Upon learning that the prince is again

"With Poins and other his continual followers,"

the king breaks out—

"The blood weeps from my heart when I do shape,
In forms imaginary, the unguided days,
And rotten times, that you shall look upon
When I am sleeping with my ancestors:
For when his headstrong riot hath no curb,
When rage and hot blood are his counsellors,
When means and lavish manners meet together,
O, with what wings shall his affection fly
Toward fronting peril and opposed decay!"

But Shakspeare takes care to remind us that Henry is not radically bad, by a speech which he puts in the mouth of a courtier.

"*Warwick*. My gracious lord, you look beyond him quite:
The prince but studies his companions,
Like a strange tongue; wherein, to gain the language,
'Tis needful that the most immodest word
Be look'd upon and learn'd; which, once attain'd,
Your highness knows, comes to no further use,
But to be known and hated. So, like gross terms,
The prince will, in the perfectness of time,
Cast off his followers: and their memory
Shall as a pattern or a measure live,
By which his grace must mete the lives of others,
Turning past evils to advantages."

The illustration is not more apt than it is delicate; but it is in keeping with the manifest intention of the poet.

I must now call in question the incident in which originated *the Crown Scene.*

This story is in Holinshed, who avowedly took it from Hall. It is also in the old play, which it is evident, to my judgment, suggested to Shakspeare some parts of the speeches.

"During his last sickness the king caused his crown (as some write) to be set on a pillow at his bed's head, and suddenly his pangs so sore troubled him that he lay as though all his vital spirits had been from him departed. Such as were about him, thinking verily that he had departed, covered his face with a linen cloth. The prince his son, being hereof advertised, entered into the chamber, took away the crown, and departed. The father being suddenly revived out of that trance, quickly perceived the lack of his crown; and, having knowledge that the prince his son had taken it away, caused him to come before his presence, requiring of him what he meant so to misuse himself. The prince, *with a good audacity,* answered, 'Sir, to mine and all men's judgments you seemed dead in this world, wherefore, I, as your next heir-apparent, took that as mine own, and not as yours.' 'Well, fair son,' said the king, with a great sigh, 'what right I had to it, God knoweth.' 'Well,' said the prince, 'if you die king, I will have the garland, and trust to keep it with the sword against all my ene-

mies, as you have done.' 'Then,' said the king, 'I commit all to God, and remember you to do well.' " *

This passage in his favourite historian entirely justifies Shakspeare in framing a scene which, notwithstanding the objection of Dr. Johnson, I regard as striking and beautiful: though every speech in it contains, as I fear nearly every speech in Shakspeare contains, something that a delicate and correct critic would expunge or alter. Yet it is an excellent scene, in tone, in topics, and (with those exceptions) in language. I know not whether, in respect of this and other passages, my ear deceives me, but to me—

" The sound does seem an echo to the sense."

I mean, that if the successive passages, different in their tendency, were read to a man ignorant of the English language, he would nevertheless distinguish them properly. In this speech, for instance, he would mark the transition from the solemn remonstrance of the king, to his speculative description of the wild and wanton England which the recklessness of his successor would exhibit. I may be wrong; but, waving this fancy, I will insert a few passages.

" *P. Henry*. I never thought to hear you speak again."

" *K. Henry*. Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought:

* Hol. 57; Hall, 45.

I stay too long by thee, I weary thee.
Dost thou so hunger for my empty chair,
That thou wilt needs invest thee with mine honours
Before thy hour be ripe? O, foolish youth!
That seek'st the greatness that will overwhelm thee.
Stay but a little; for my cloud of dignity
Is held from falling with so weak a wind,
That it will quickly drop: my day is dim.
Thou hast stol'n that which, after some few hours,
Were thine without offence; and, at my death,
Thou hast seal'd up my expectation:
Thy life did manifest thou lov'st me not,
And thou wilt have me die assured of it.
Thou hid'st a thousand daggers in thy thoughts;
Which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart,
To stab at half an hour of my life.
What! canst thou not forbear me half an hour?
Then get thee gone; and dig my grave thyself;
And bid the merry bells ring to thine ear,
That thou art crowned, not that I am dead.
Let all the tears that should bedew my hearse,
Be drops of balm to sanctify thy head:
Only compound me with forgotten dust;
Give that, which gave thee life, unto the worms;
Pluck down my officers, break my decrees;
For now a time is come to mock at form.
Harry the Fifth is crown'd! Up, vanity!
Down, royal state! All you sage counsellors, hence!
And to the English court assemble now,
From every region, apes of idleness!

Now, neighbour confines, purge you of your scum :
Have you a ruffian that will swear, drink, dance,
Revel the night; rob, murder, and commit
The oldest sins the newest kinds of ways ?
Be happy, he will trouble you no more !*
England will give him office, honour, might;
For the fifth Harry from curb'd licence plucks
The muzzle of restraint, and the wild dog
Shall flesh his tooth in every innocent."

Then the Prince in a serious strain—

" *P. Henry.* O pardon me, my liege ! but for my
tears,
The moist impediments unto my speech,
I had forestall'd this dear and deep rebuke,
Ere you with grief had spoke, and I had heard
The course of it so far. There is your crown,
And He that wears the crown immortally,
Long guard it yours ! If I affect it more
Than as your honour, and as your renown,
Let me no more from this obedience rise
(Which my most true and inward-duteous spirit
Teacheth), this prostrate and exterior bending !
Heaven witness with me, when I here came in,
And found no course of breath within your majesty,

* Then follows a line—*England shall double gild his treble guilt*—which Warburton expunges as nonsense. Though I agree with Johnson that Shakspeare wrote this, and many others like it, I do not feel bound to extract it. But I do *not* agree with Johnson, that the prince's speech is not in a higher strain than this unfortunate line.

How cold it struck my heart! If I do feign,
O let me in my present wildness die;
And never live to shew the incredulous world
The noble change that I have purposed!
Coming to look on you, thinking you dead,
(And dead almost, my liege, to think you were,)
I spake unto the crown as having sense,
And thus upbraided it: the care on thee depending
Hath fed upon the body of my father.

* * * * *

Accusing it, I put it on my head;
To try with it,—as with an enemy,
That had before my face murdered my father,—
The quarrel of a true inheritor;
But if it did infect my blood with joy,
Or swell my thoughts to any strain of pride;
If any rebel or vain spirit of mine
Did, with the least affection of a welcome,
Give entertainment to the might of it,
Let heaven for ever keep it from my head!
And make me as the poorest vassal is,
That doth with awe and terror kneel to it!

"*K. Henry.* O, my son!
Heaven put it in thy mind to take it hence,
That thou might'st win the more thy father's love,
Pleading so wisely in excuse of it."

I have no room for the rest, which, if not genuine, is consistent. In conclusion the poet follows the Chronicle.

" How came I by the crown, O God, forgive!
And grant it may with thee in true peace live!
P. Henry. My gracious liege,
You won it, wore it, kept it, gave it me;
Then plain and right must my possession be;
Which I, with more than with a common pain,
'Gainst all the world will rightfully maintain."

No one of the contemporary historians has this story of the crown. Elmham describes the death-bed of Henry with incidents entirely different. The prince took the sacrament with his father, who blessed him after the manner of the patriarchs.* The oldest version of it is in the French chronicle of Monstrelet, who wrote within a few years of the event, though, if alive at the time, he was very young. Monstrelet prefaces his account with a remark which his English chroniclers neglect, and of which Tyler has not availed himself.

" It was *the custom in that country*, whenever the king was ill, to place the royal crown on a cushion beside his bed, and *for his successor to take it on his death.*"†

The prince, being informed by the attendants that the king was dead, took the crown as a matter of course; and his reviving father did not so much reprove him for his precipitancy as remind him that he had no right to the crown, because the father himself had none. The story is told not as

* P. 13. † Monstr. i. 451.

against the son, but as exhibiting the father's consciousness of his usurpation. The cause of Richard, whose infant wife was a daughter of France, was always popular in that country.

I am not aware that any such custom is mentioned by an English antiquary. The Frenchman may have drawn upon his imagination for the rest of the story as well as for this. But I admit the case to be one of those in which the story itself, and the invention of it without foundation, are both so improbable that there is only a choice of difficulties.

The king's mistake about the Jerusalem chamber is from Holinshed; who also mentions, but only as applicable to the last year of this reign, the notion of an expedition to the Holy Land.*

In the last chapter I referred to the king's discontent with the conduct of the prince, and to the supposed supersession of young Henry in the council by his brother Thomas.† Henry was certainly not put out of the council at the time imagined by Shakspeare; but it is the opinion of his latest and most elaborate eulogist, Mr. Tyler, that he had ceased to be of the council some time before his father's death, and that there was some disagreement between the prince and the king. The causes are not clearly developed.

Up to the year 1411 there is uninterrupted tes-

* Hol. 57—59.

† See p. 101.

timony to the favour in which Henry stood with his father and his council, and with the parliament. From both the latter bodies he received thanks for his service on the Welsh border.* In 1409 and 1410 he was appointed warden of the Cinque Ports and captain of Dover Castle; and in these years he was of the privy council, and necessarily the first member of it.† And his father, about the same time, granted to him a house at Coldharbour, near *Eastcheap*, in the city of London.

It was while he had all these honours, and this residence, that an affray took place between some citizens of London, and *two of the king's sons* at supper, after midnight, in Eastcheap; and it is a remarkable fact, that of these, *Henry was not one:* the delinquents were the Princes Thomas and John,‡ —that John of whom Falstaff says, "this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me, nor a man cannot make him laugh, but that's no marvel, he drinks no wine."§ And after this occurrence, as well as before it, Henry still took part in the council.

In 1411 a part of the force under the prince's command was sent to assist the Duke of Burgundy

* See Tyler, 191, 222.

† Tyler (236, 237, 258) styles him President; I know not upon what authority. Certainly "the Prince and council" are mentioned in the Rolls.—Lud. 64-6; Nicolas, ii. 339.

‡ Stow. in Lud. 90. § Act iv. Sc. 7.

against the Duke of Orleans, and it has been inferred, from the dates, that out of this occurrence there grew a coolness between the King and the Prince. Hardyng, after mentioning the expedition in aid of Burgundy, writes—

" The King discharged the Prince from his council,
And set my lord Sir Thomas in his stead,
Chief of Council, for the King's more avail,
For which the Prince, of wrath and wilfulhood,
Again him made debate and forwardhood,
With whom the King took part and held the field,
To time the Prince unto the King did yield."*

One contemporary writer says that the aid to Burgundy was sent with the king's approbation; but another tells us that the king afterwards favoured the rival faction;† and this is the period at which, according to both, some persons about the king endeavoured, not unsuccessfully, to set father and son at variance: and then comes the strange story, amplified by Holinshed‡ from those old Chroniclers, of Henry's visit to his father in company with his numerous friends, and his offer to sacrifice his own life.

The scene is said to have terminated in a recon-

* P. 369.

† See Elmham, p. 11; Otterburne, 270, 271; and Hardyng, 369; but this was after the dismissal from council.

‡ See No. ccxii. 474. As to the dress, see Luders, 149.

ciliation. Nevertheless, whatever might be the cause, the records show that the Prince of Wales did cease to attend the council.* Tyler thinks that the king grew jealous of the popularity of his son;† but it is clear that the dissolute habits of the prince were neither the cause (as Shakspeare intimates) nor the consequence (as Schlegel apprehends) of the king's estrangement, or the prince's absence from council.‡

The fifth act introduces the younger Henry as king. There is, I think, some inconsistency in the unfavourable comparison which *Warwick* makes of Henry the Fifth with his three brothers.

> "O that the living Harry had the temper
> Of him, the worst of these three gentlemen!
> How many nobles then should hold their places,
> That must strike sail to spirits of vile sort!"

This is the very man whom we have twice noticed as taking the part of Prince Henry, and prophesying that he would cast off his companions of "vile sort."

But the new king soon satisfies them all.

* Some time before February, 1412. Tyler i. 293-8.

† So Luders, 133.

‡ See in Tyler i. 282, and ii, 425, a refutation of a story, adopted by Turner, iii. p. 373, of the prince's attempt, in 1411, to usurp regal authority.

"This is the English, not the Turkish court:
Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,
But Harry, Harry."

Malone has accounted for this reference to Turkish history. Amurath the Third died in 1596, about the time when this play was written. The people preferred Amurath, the younger son, to Mahomet, the eldest; Mahomet invited all his brothers to a feast and strangled them.*

We have already partly noticed the dialogue which now occurs between Henry and the chief justice.† The new king makes an *amende* completely *honorable* to the intrepid judge; he confirms him in his office, and invites him to take "foremost hand" in the national councils.

All this may have been suggested by the old play. Holinshed tells us only that "he chose men of gravity, wit, and high policy, by whose wise council he might at all times rule to his honour and dignity;"‡ calling to mind, it is added, the stout behaviour of the chief justice in committing him. But in the old Chronicles there is no warrant even for this reminiscence; and the records show that within a few days of Henry's accession, a new chief justice was appointed in the room of Gascoigne.§

* Bosw. 208.
† P. 49.
‡ Hol., 61.
§ Tyler, i. 369.

David Hume, in his history, describes the chief justice as "trembling to approach the royal presence." The historian, I verily believe, had no authority but that of Shakspeare; it is not only boys, or uneducated soldiers, that learn English history from the great dramatist!

But the poet has the authority of older as well as of later Chronicles for Henry's change of manners and conduct.

"I survive
To mock the expectations of the world;
To frustrate prophecies; and to raze out
Rotten opinion, which has writ me down
After my seeming. The tide of blood in me
Hath proudly flowed in vanity till now;
Nor doth it turn, and ebb back to the sea;
Where it shall mingle with the state of floods,
And flow henceforth in formal majesty."

I have already said* that it is from the concurring testimony of historians to this reformation, that the previous state of reprobation is inferred.

"He was suddenly changed into another man, regardful of honesty, modesty, and gravity, endeavouring to practise every sort of virtue. His manners and conduct were an example to every class, as well of ecclesiastics as of laymen."†

* P. 469.

† Wals., 382; and see Otterb, 273; Elmham, 16; Luders, 115.

One of the principal symptoms of amendment is, in the play, the banishment of Falstaff and the other companions of the prince. For this there can be no ancient authority, since there is none for the vile associates. But even the more recent authority, on which Shakspeare generally relies, fails him when he makes Henry severe and harsh towards the friends of his youth.

"Whereas aforetime he had made himself a companion unto misruly mates of dissolute order and life, he now banished them all from his presence, *but not unrewarded or else unpreferred*, inhibiting them, upon a great pain, not once to approach, lodge, or sojourn within ten miles of his court or presence."

And Stow's * language is remarkable in illustration of what I have said of the rank and situation of Henry's associates.

"After his coronation he called unto him all those *young lords and gentlemen* that were the followers of his young acts, to every one of whom he gave *rich and bounteous gifts*, and then commanded that *as many as would change their manners, as he intended to do, should abide with him in his court;* and to all that would persevere in their former light conversation he gave express commandment, upon pain of their heads, never after this day to come into his presence."

* P. 342.

The king's speech in the play is rather less liberal than even that of Holinshed. In the former part of the speech in the play,* Henry makes a joke upon Falstaff's bulk, and then tells him not to reply "with a fool-born jest!" Warburton thinks this a high touch of nature. Henry was relapsing into Hal, but checked himself. This *is* natural; and we have heard of other Princes of Wales who would wage an unequal war of jokes. But I suspect that it was Shakspeare who relapsed, not his hero. The king then proceeds gravely:—

"Presume not that I am the thing I was;
For heaven doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turn'd away my former self;
So will I those that kept my company.
When thou dost hear I am as I have been,
Approach me; and thou shalt be as thou wast,
The tutor and the feeder of my riots:
Till then, I banish thee, on pain of death,—
As I have done the rest of my misleaders,—
Not to come near our person by ten mile.
The competence of life I will allow you,
That lack of means enforce you not to evil;
And, as we hear you do reform yourselves,
We will, according to your strength and qualities,
Give you advancement."

* Act v. Sc. 5.

But all this liberality appears to have been forgotten in a moment :—

"*Ch. Justice.* Go, carry Sir John Falstaff *to the Fleet.* Take all his company along with him."

Johnson can find no better reason for this harsh measure than the dramatist's desire to get his hero off the stage.* The Doctor's criticism on these two plays of "Henry the Fourth" are, for him, unusually favourable :—

"Perhaps no author has in two plays afforded so much delight. The great events are interesting, for the fate of kingdoms depends upon them ; the slighter occurrences are diverting, and, except one or two, sufficiently probable ; the incidents are multiplied with wonderful fertility of invention, and the characters diversified with the utmost nicety of discernment, and the profoundest skill in the nature of man."

I agree with Dr. Johnson in deeming these two of the best of the historical plays ; and they are remarkable for nothing more eminently than the diversity of the characters. Of these, some are pure inventions ; others are skilfully adopted from the writers of history. Such is the character of Prince Henry, of which the Chronicles, whether true or false, furnish an outline sufficiently definite. To complete the characters of Hotspur and Glen-

* Bosw. 239.

dower, the poet necessarily drew more largely on his imagination, but each of the three characters is consistent and natural. So also is that of Northumberland, and, so far as they are developed, Mowbray and the Archbishop. The little that we have of a Prince John, except as a commander, is imaginary. There is no ground for imputing to him more sobriety than is allowed to his brothers. There is nothing very striking in Shakspeare's delineation of Henry the Fourth himself; but nothing, assuredly, to offend nature or violate history.

HENRY V.

I NOW come to a play illustrative of a period which has recently been the subject of elaborate research. Indeed, not only the play of "Henry the Fifth," but that which precedes it is the object of historical criticisms, rather more particular than those which have been applied to preceding plays, but not one of these goes deeper than the comparatively modern Chronicles to which Shakspeare himself resorted. Even Malone never corrects Hall or Holinshed from more ancient historical records. This remark is in no degree applicable to Mr. Tyler, to whose memoirs of Henry the Fifth, I have already referred, or to Sir Harris Nicolas, whose History of the battle of Agincourt I deem, notwithstanding a few faults which I still find with its conclusions, a pattern for historical pieces.*

* Sir H. Nicolas is not only full and precise in his references, but he gives at length in his appendix the passages upon which he founds his history. I feel myself justified in referring to *him*, in many cases, instead of naming each separate authority which he quotes. I wish that Mr. Tyler had enabled me to show him equal respect.

The necessity of going farther than the Chronicles, if one would ascertain how far Shakspeare may be received as an historian, appears in the first scene of this play.

The Archbishop of Canterbury* and the Bishop of Ely† are introduced at the court at Kenilworth lamenting that in parliament—

> "That self bill is urged,
> Which, in the eleventh year of the last king's reign
> Was like, and had indeed against us passed,
> But that the scambling and unquiet time
> Did push it out of further question.
> . . . . . If it pass against us,
> We lose the better half of our possession:
> For all the temporal lands, which men devout
> By testament have given to the church,
> Would they strip from us.

And the archbishop then enumerates the earls, knights, and esquires, whom this diverted revenue would "maintain to the king's honour," besides supporting a great many poor people, and yielding to the king a yearly surplus of 1000*l.*

* Henry Chicheley, the founder of All Soul's College. He was born in 1362, succeeded Archbishop Arundel in March, 1414, and died in 1443.

† John Fordham appears to have been Bishop of Ely at this time, but I know not why Shakspeare selects him.—Godwin, 266.

"*Ely*. This would drink deep.
Cant. 'Twould drink the cup and all."

In considering how this fatal blow is to be, the prelates advert to Henry's disposition and altered character, in terms which, for several reasons, I must quote:—

"*Cant*. The king is full of grace and fair regard.
Ely. And a true lover of the holy church.
Cant. The courses of his youth promised it not.
The breath no sooner left his father's body,
But that his wildness, mortified in him,
Seemed to die too: yea, at that very moment,
Consideration, like an angel, came
And whipp'd the offending Adam out of him;
Leaving his body as a paradise,
To envelop and contain celestial spirits.
Never was such a sudden scholar made:
Never came reformation in a flood,
With such a heady current, scouring faults;
Nor never Hydra-headed wilfulness
So soon did lose his seat, and all at once,
As in this king.
Ely. We are blessed in the change."

All this is scarcely beyond what I have already cited from the old historians. In what follows, Shakspeare becomes a little more poetical,* in more senses than one:—

* Holinshed speaks very favourably of the king, but neither he nor any other writer with whom I am acquainted,

" *Cant.* Hear him but reason in divinity,
And, all-admiring, with an inward wish
You would desire, the king were made a prelate;
Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,
You'd say,—it hath been all-in-all his study:
List his discourse of war, and you shall hear
A fearful battle rendered you in music:
Turn him to any cause of policy,
The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,
Familiar as his garter; that when he speaks,
The air, a charter'd libertine, is still,
And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears
To steal his sweet and honey'd sentences;
So that the art and practick part of life
Is but the mistress to his theoric:
Which is a wonder, how his grace should glean it,
Since his addiction was to courses vain;

ascribes to him the various talents which the archbishop enumerates. "Virtuously considering in his mind (says Holinshed) that all goodness cometh of God, he determined to begin with something acceptable to his divine Majesty, and therefore commanded the clergy sincerely and truly to preach the word of God and to live accordingly, that they might be the lanterns of light to the temporalty, as their profession required. The laymen he willed to serve God and obey their prince; prohibiting them above all things breach of matrimony, custom in swearing, and, namely, wilful perjury. Besides this, he elected the best learned men in the laws of the realm to the offices of justice, and men of good living he preferred to high degrees and authority."—p. 62.

His companies unletter'd, rude, and shallow;
His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports;
And never noted him in any study,
Any retirement, any sequestration
From open haunts and popularity."

After more of metaphorical wonderment at the change of character, the Bishop of Ely asks how the king is affected towards the bill? The metropolitan answers that he is rather on the side of the church—

"For I have made an offer to his majesty,—
Upon our spiritual convocation;
And in regard of causes now in hand,
Which I have opened to his grace at large,
As touching France,—to give a greater sum
Than ever at one time the clergy yet,
Did to his predecessors part withal."

The king is now introduced, surrounded by his counsellors, and before he suffers the ambassador from France to be admitted, desires that the archbishop may be sent for:—

"We would be resolved,
Before we hear him, of some things of weight
That task our thoughts, as touching us and France."

The archbishop now appears, and the king solemnly adjures him to give a conscientious answer to the question which he asks—

"Why the law Salique, that they have in France,
Or should, or should not, bar us in our claim."

Whereupon the prelate proves, in a very learned discourse, that the Salique land is not France, but a district in Germany, between the Elbe and Sala, called Meisen. In that district Charles the Great,

"Holding in disdain the German women,
For some dishonest manners of their lives,—
Establish'd there this law, to wit, *no female*
Should be inheritrix in Salique land."

This land, the archbishop argues, did not come into the possession of the French until 421 years after the death of Pharamond, who was falsely supposed to have made this law. He died in the year 426, and Charles the Great established the French beyond the river Sala in 805.

The primate cites precedents. King Pepin's claim to the crown of France was derived from Blithild, daughter of King Clothair: that Hugh Capet derived from the Lady Lingare, daughter to Charlemain. And, moreover, Lewis the Ninth was not easy on his throne till he had ascertained that his grandmother Isabel descended from the Lady Ermengare, daughter to Charles Duke of Loraine, (the heir of Charles the Great,) from whom Hugh Capet had usurped the crown.

Chicheley does not explain the title of Henry

himself, but he, nevertheless, exhorts him to claim the crown of France, and to emulate the glories of Edward the Third and the Black Prince. And he proffers the liberal aid from the clergy, of which we have already heard.

He is seconded by the Bishop of Ely, who is supported by the Duke of Exeter* and the Earl of Westmoreland. King Henry expresses some apprehension of danger from Scotland:—

> "For you shall read, that my great-grandfather
> Never went with his forces into France,
> But that the Scot on his unfurnish'd kingdom
> Came pouring like the tide into a breach."

And Westmoreland quotes an old saying—

> "If that you will France win,
> Then with Scotland first begin."

But the archbishop makes another, perhaps rather prosy, oration, in which he introduces the well-known description of the commonwealth of bees, by whose operations he illustrates, not very logically, the intended expedition into France.

The king is now resolved, and receives the ambassadors of the dauphin, who, after some apologies, deliver the present of *tennis-balls*, with which that

* Thomas Beaufort, youngest natural son of John of Gaunt by Catherine Swinford; he was in truth, now only Earl of Dorset, not being created Duke of Exeter until 1416.

prince thought fit to insult the king; who receives it with becoming contempt, and returns a manful defiance.

The whole of this scene is taken from Holinshed, who borrowed it from Hall. And subsequent historians, particularly Hume,* always happy to have a fling at the clergy, have traced Henry's ambitious attempts upon the crown of France to the instigation of the heads of the church, and especially Archbishop Chicheley, who hoped thereby to divert the attention of the king and parliament from the ecclesiastical revenues.

Now, it is true that we are told in "The Parliamentary History,"† upon what authority I know not, ‡ that in a parliament held at Leicester on the 30th of April, 1414, the commons reminded the king of a suggestion which they had made four years before, *viz.* "in the eleventh year of the late king's reign," for diverting to civil uses some part of the revenues of the church.§ It is also true that, one month after the meeting of this parliament,

* iii. 9. † i. 324.

‡ I find nothing in Otterbourne, Walsingham, Titus, Livius, or Elmham; nor can I find any petition or address in the Rolls; but one may have escaped me. Mr. Tyler says it is "a matter of *historical certainty* that the commons were clamorous for the alienation of the ecclesiastical revenue." § But he gives no authority.

§ This is found in Wals., 379.—See Parl. Hist., p. 310.

Henry sent ambassadors to France, who were instructed, in the first instance, to claim the crown. But it is equally certain that, before the meeting of this parliament, and previously to the preferment of Chicheley to the primacy, Henry had made demands upon France which he could scarcely expect to obtain without a war. He had not, I believe, claimed the crown, but he had insisted upon the renewal of the treaty of Bretigny, made between Edward the Third and the Dauphin Charles, acting for his captive father, King John, after the battle of Poitiers; and upon the restitution of all the possessions in France which had been taken from the kings of England since that time. This demand involved a cession on the part of France of the duchy of Normandy and Touraine, the earldoms of Anjou and Maine, the duchy of Brittany, and other possessions;* and Henry, moreover, demanded a portion of no less than two millions of crowns with Catherine, the daughter of France, whom, as a part of the arrangement proposed, he was to have in marriage.

Nor do the ancient historians connect the French war with the *spoliation* bill, or with the archbishop. The speech in the play, which contains the argument upon the Salic law, is taken almost verbatim from Holinshed but there is no trace of it in Otterbourne,

* Nicolas's Agincourt, p. 2.

Walsingham, Hardyng, or Elmham. The last indeed says that, before the king went to France he satisfied himself, by the advice of accomplished and wise men, that nothing in divine or human law forbade his expedition.* But he had not even mentioned the obnoxious bill, or the clergy. And no one of the other three writers takes any notice even of this consultation, still less of the other topics in question. Hall was, I believe, the first writer who imputed the war to the clergy; and he makes up in severity and ill-nature for the silence of his predecessors. Holinshed, whom Shakspeare copies,† thus tells the story :—

"In this parliament many profitable laws were concluded, and many petitions moved were for that time deferred. Amongst which one was, that a bill exhibited in the parliament holden at Westminister in the eleventh year of King Henry the Fourth (which by reason the king was then troubled with civil discord came to none effect) might now with good deliberation be produced and brought to some good conclusion. The effect of which deliberation was that the temporal lands devoutly given,

* "Magnanimitas regia, prius tamen virorum perfectorum ac sapientum informata consilio, quod lege divinæ seu humanæ nihil contrarium operatur, si in justa guerrarum excitatur primordia, elatam et indignantem Gallorum rebellionem a mentis excubiis non expellit," &c.—p. 34.

† Malone shows that Holinshed was always consulted by Shakspeare.—Bosw. 267, 270.

and disordinately spent by religious and other spiritual persons, should be seized into the king's hands, since the same might suffice to maintain, to the honour of the king and defence of the realm, 15 earls, 1500 knights, 6200 esquires, and 100 almshouses for relief only of the poor, impotent, and needy persons, and the king to have clearly to his coffers 20,000*l.*, with many other provisions and values of religious houses which I pass over. This bill was much noted, and was feared among the religious sort, whom surely it touched very near, and therefore, to find remedy against it, they determined to essay all ways to put by and overthrow this bill; wherein they thought best to try if they might move the king's mood with some sharp invention that he should not regard the importunate petitions of the commons.'* *

Then follows Chicheley's speech, which having been paraphrased by Shakspeare, and copied into the "Parliamentary History," passes for genuine, as though it had been reported by Hansard.

The pedigree has puzzled everybody. I find in Betham's genealogical tables (No. 252), that Pepin was descended from Blithild, as stated; but I do not find that Hugh Capet had any ancestress of the name of Lingare, or Charlemain such a daughter. Charles, Duke of Lorraine, had a daughter, Ermengarde, married to the Duke of

* Hol.; 65.

Namur. I do not know whether Queen Isabel came from her.*

The quotation from Numbers,† is also from Holinshed, and the speeches of Westmoreland and Exeter, but with some variation. Westmoreland was warden of the Scottish marches, and, according to Holinshed, "moved the king to begin first with Scotland." He quoted the old saw, in favour of that course of policy. Exeter replied to him, reversing the proverb, and urging that it was proper to begin with France; "if the king might once compass the conquest of France, Scotland could not long resist . . . . for where should the Scots learn policy and skill to defend themselves, if they had not their bringing up and training in France."‡

Shakspeare has, apparently of his own mere motion, put into the mouth of the king a correct historical argument founded upon the invasions of England by the Scots, in the time of Edward III.

There is another passage in which Shakspeare has gone beyond the page before him. In Chicheley's energetic exhortation, he says to Henry :—

> "Go, my dread lord, to your great grandsire's tomb
> From whom you claim ; invoke his warlike spirit,
> And your great uncle's, Edward the Black Prince ;

* See Bosw., 273, 4. † Numb. xxvii. 8. ‡ Hol., 66.

Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,
Making defeat on the full power of France;
While his most mighty father, on a hill
Stood smiling, to behold the lion's whelp
Forage in blood of French nobility."

It has been observed that this allusion is taken from Holinshed, when speaking of the battle of Crecy.*

The dramatist, however, places his scene at Kenilworth, in which he also copies Holinshed, only throwing together the transactions of that place and Leicester. It is probable that Henry kept his court at Kenilworth during the Leicester parliament, and the older Chronicles, as well as Holinshed, place him there when he received the "merry message" of the Dauphin. Unaccountable as this anecdote is, there is better authority for it, than for the interference of the clergy; for it is mentioned by Otterbourne, Elmham, and others. I know not whether *Paris balls* (Holinshed's term as well as that of Otterbourne) necessarily imply balls used in tennis, which in fact required great strength and activity; but the context rather points to a sort of ball which is played with by children.† Yet some contemporary writers call them

* Hol., 639; Bosw., 272.

† Misit pilas Parisianas ad ludendum cum pueris; Otterb., 274; and see Nicolas, p. 9.

tennis-balls as Shakspeare does.* The sender of this insulting present is by Otterbourne called Charles; but Charles (afterwards VII.) was not yet the dauphin: the present dauphin was Louis, who died in the lifetime of Charles VI. It is remarkable that this prince, who is supposed to have ridiculed, in this singular method, the youth and trifling character of the King of England, was himself under nineteen years of age, whereas Henry was now twenty-five; aud he was, moreover, according to French historians, a youth of much profaneness and depravity.†

The story is itself improbable; it has been truly observed, that while the King of France made offers to Henry, which were liberal, though not quite equal to his demands, it was not likely that his son should thus exasperate him.‡ I would here observe, that while Shakspeare would apparently have us look upon Henry's claims as perfectly justified, modern historians are apt to treat them as altogether unrighteous, and dictated by an inordinate ambition; and of this opinion, I fear, is Sir Harris Nicolas, who has so ably described the king's warlike achievements. Now it appears to me that though the claim to the crown could not be sustained, Henry had a just cause of war with

* See Nicolas, p. 11.

† Sismondi, xiii., 456; from Des Ursins, 285.

‡ Hume, and Nicolas, 9.

France, from her breach of the treaty of Bretigny; and a just right to demand, at the least, all that had been lost since the renewal of hostilities on the part of France, for the provinces taken from his predecessors had not been ceded by any treaty of peace. England had been wrongfully dispossessed of them, and had never renounced her right to recover them. And in this view, the argument by which it is contended that the right of Edward III. had descended, not to the House of Lancaster, but to the representatives of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, has no weight. The personal claim might be in them; but surely the rights acquired by treaty were in the sovereign of England for the time being.*

The second act brings us to Southampton, the place of Henry's embarkation for France. We are here introduced to the Duke of Bedford, whom we formerly knew as Prince John of Lancaster: and we have now the arrest and condemnation of the Earl of Cambridge,† Lord Scrope,‡ and Sir Tho-

* See Tyler, ii., p. 84, &c. He shows that Henry was urged by his people, and that there was by no means an ill opinion of his claims even in foreign countries.

† Richard Earl of Cambridge, second son of the Duke of York, with whom we meet in the play of Richard II., and brother to Edward, the Duke of York of this play.

‡ Henry, third Lord Scrope of Masham; nephew of Archbishop Scrope.

mas Grey,* who conspired against the life of the king.

Shakspeare copies Holinshed pretty closely, with the dramatic addition which makes the conspirators, unconscious of the detection of their own guilt, urge Henry to execute rigid justice upon an inconsiderable offender. The older historians support Holinshed and Shakspeare in describing Scrope as the occasional bedfellow of the king; and the Chronicler says that "he represented so great gravity in his countenance, such modesty in behaviour, and so virtuous zeal to all godliness in his talk, that whatever he said was thought for the most part necessary to be done and followed."†

"But O!
What shall I say to thee, Lord Scrope, thou cruel,
Ungrateful, savage, and inhuman creature!
Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels,
That knew'st the very bottom of my soul,
That almost might'st have coin'd me into gold,
Wouldst thou have practised on me for thy use?"

I omit much about the superior skill and in-

* This knight was of the family from which Earl Grey is descended; I rather suppose his lineal ancestor, who married Alice, daughter of the Earl of Westmoreland. Sir John Grey, of Heaton, of an elder branch of Greys, now extinct, was a distinguished soldier in the French war.—Collins, v. 677-682.

† Hol., 70.

genuity of the particular devil who tempted this man to sin:—

"O, how hast thou with jealousy infected
The sweetness of affiance! Show men dutiful?
Why, so didst thou: Seem they grave and learned?
Why, so didst thou: Come they of noble family?
Why, so didst thou: Seem they religious?
Why, so didst thou: Or are they spare in diet;
Free from gross passion, or of mirth, or anger;
Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood;
Garnish'd and deck'd in modest complement;
Not working with the eye, without the ear,
And, but in purged judgment, trusting neither?
Such, and so finely bolted, didst thou seem."

The king's address to the three, before they are carried off in custody, is most literally copied; and it is followed in the Chronicle as in the play, by the execution of summary justice. But Holinshed gives also* another account, more consistent with the records, for he gives the purport of the indictment. The criminals were regularly indicted, and tried and convicted by a common jury. Grey was executed; but Cambridge and Scrope claimed the privilege of their peerage, which however was very insufficiently afforded to them, for they were not *tried* by their peers. The record and sentence

* P. 71.

were submitted to a court of peers, and confirmed; whereupon, the former sentence was executed.*

Cambridge says in the play—

"For me, the gold of France did not seduce,
Although I did admit it as a motive,
The sooner to effect what I intended."

This is clearly from Holinshed, who says that his intention was to exalt to the crown his brother-in-law, Edmund, Earl of March, as heir to Lionel, Duke of Clarence; after the death of this Earl, the crown would come to Cambridge's wife. And this scheme (in which we have the beginning of the contention between the Houses of York and Lancaster) was charged upon him in the indictment.

Contemporary writers, mentioned by Nicolas, avow that these unhappy men received "a million of gold" (I know not what sum is intended thereby) from the King of France.

It is remarkable, and is perhaps of some importance to the controversy concerning the death of Richard II., that the indictment charged the accused with conspiring to proclaim March rightful heir to the crown, *in case Richard II. was actually dead;* and with sending to Scotland, to bring over Thomas de Trumpyngton, *because he resembled Richard in person.*†

The fourth scene introduces us to the French

* Nicolas, p. 38. † Nicolas, p. 39; and Hol., 71.

court, where Charles VI. is surrounded by the Dauphin, the Duke of Burgundy, and the constable, Charles D'Albret. The mention of Burgundy is, I believe, erroneous; nor did Shakspeare find it in Holinshed. Burgundy had not, at this time, come in person to the succour of the king. Indeed, a negociation had been on foot between him and Henry V., one object of which was the marriage of the king with Catherine of Burgundy; and it has been supposed that the distracted state of France between the Burgundian and Orleans factions, were among the inducements to Henry's invasion. Nevertheless, he sent his forces to join the king's army.

The Dauphin is again made to hold Henry for a trifler:—

> "She is so idly king'd,
> Her sceptre so fantastically borne,
> By a vain, giddy, shallow, humorous youth,
> That fear attends her not."

The constable corrects him, but speaks of the king's "vanities fore-spent." All this is in keeping with the whole plot of these plays, and with popular belief, but there is neither probability nor record to support the notion, that the French had a low opinion of Henry, whom they had indeed found—

> "how terrible in constant resolution."

Ambassadors from England are now announced, and the Duke of Exeter appears. Here a great liberty is taken with history. Exeter's mission, as mentioned by Holinshed,* took place a considerable time before Henry went to France, or even to Southampton. But I do not find that Exeter was in any one of Henry's missions to the French king; nor was there any mission, as this is described to be, after the landing of the English in France.

" *Exeter*. Dispatch us with all speed, lest that our king
Come here himself to question our delay,
For he is footed in this land already."

Henry landed on the 14th of August, 1415. There had been two embassies to France, one in January, 1414, the other in May, 1415.† The most recent ambassage was from France to England, whither the Archbishop of Bourges (who is introduced into the old play) was sent only one month before the embarkation of Henry. Of this negociation there are various accounts, but it appears to have been broken off upon the amount of the money which the Princess Catherine of France was to bring to England, and of her dower, and of the time at which the payment should be made. The demand of the crown of France was suspended,

* P. 67. † Nicolas, p. 122.

but I am inclined to agree with Sir Harris Nicolas, that Henry was at this time resolved upon war.

That Shakspeare now relied more upon popular tradition than upon his usual authority, is apparent from his discrepancy with Holinshed, as to the terms demanded on this the last occasion.

" At time prefixed, (at Winchester), before the king's presence, sitting on his throne imperial, the Archbishop of Bruges made an eloquent and a long oration, dissuading war, and praising peace; offering the King of England a great sum of money, with divers countries, being in very deed but fair and poor, as a dowry with the lady Catherine, in marriage, so that he would dissolve his army and dismiss his soldiers, which he had gathered and put in a readiness. When his oration was ended, the king caused the ambassadors to be highly feasted, and set them at his own table. And, after a day assigned in the foresaid hall, the Archbishop of Canterbury to their oration made a notable answer, the effect of which was, that if the French king would not give with his daughter in marriage the duchies of Aquitain, Anjou, and all other signories and *dominions sometime appertaining to the noble progenitors of the King of England,* he would in no wise retire his army, nor break his journey; but would with all diligence enter into France, destroy the people, waste the country, and subvert the town with blood, sword, and fire, and never cease till he had recovered his ancient right and lawful patrimony. The king avowed the archbishop's saying,

and on the word of a prince, promised to perform it to the uttermost."

There is here no peremptory demand of the crown of France.

I venture to admire the introduction to the third act, in spite of Dr. Johnson.

" *Chorus*. Thus, with imagin'd wing, our swift scene flies,
In motion of no less celerity
Than that of thought. Suppose that you have seen
The well-appointed king at Hampton pier
Embark his royalty; and his brave fleet
With silken streamers the young Phœbus fanning.
Play with your fancies; and in them behold,
Upon the hempen tackle, ship-boys climbing:
Hear the shrill whistle, which doth order give
To sounds confused: behold the threaden sails
Borne with the invisible and creeping wind,
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrow'd sea,
Breasting the lofty surge: O, do but think
You stand upon the rivage, and behold
A city on the inconstant billows dancing;
For so appears this fleet majestical,
Holding due course to Harfleur. Follow, follow!
Grapple your minds to sternage of this navy,
And leave you England, as dead midnight still,
Guarded with grandsires, babies, and old women,
Either pass'd, or not arrived to, pith and puissance:
For who is he, whose chin is but enrich'd

With one appearing hair, that will not follow
These cull'd and choice-drawn cavaliers to France?
Work, work your thoughts, and therein see a siege;
Behold the ordnance on their carriages,
With fatal mouths gaping on girded Harfleur.
Suppose the ambassador from the French comes back;
Tells Harry, that the king doth offer him
Katharine his daughter; and with her, to dowry,
Some petty and unprofitable dukedoms.
The offer likes not; and the nimble gunner
With linstock now the devilish cannon touches,
And down goes all before them. Still be kind,
And eke out our performance with your mind."

As Shakspeare does not follow history in the negociations between Henry and the French government, I know not to which of the numerous proposals that were interchanged he now alludes. But it is true that the Archbishop of Bourges, whom I have already mentioned, offered "Angouleme and Bijome, and various other territories,"* very inferior to Henry's demand.

We now find Henry and his army before Harfleur. His address to his soldiers may perhaps be suggested by one which Holinshed† ascribes to a later period of the campaign:—

—"a right grave oration moving them to play the men, whereby to obtain a glorious victory, as there was

* Nicolas, p. 3. † P. 79

hope certain they should, the rather if they would but remember the just cause for which they fought, and when they should encounter such faint-hearted people as their ancestors had so often overcome."

"*K. Henry.* Once more unto the breach, dear friends,
once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead!
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favoured rage;
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect.
. . . . . On, on, you noble English,
Whose blood is fetch'd from fathers of war-proof!
Fathers, that like so many Alexanders,
Have, in these parts, from morn till even fought,
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument.
Dishonour not your mothers; now attest
That those whom you call fathers did beget you!
Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
And teach them how to war! And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
That you are worth your breeding; which I doubt not;
For there is none of you so mean and base
That hath not noble lustre in his eyes."

Shakspeare judiciously omits the depreciation

of the beaten, which, in truth, derogates from the merit of the conquerors; nor is *faint-hearted* an epithet to be applied to French soldiers.

In another speech,* addressed to the inhabitants of Harfleur, Henry threatens, in terms approaching to brutality, which I have no desire to extract, to give up the town to pillage and unrestrained license, if it holds out longer. The governor, announcing the failure of succour from the king, surrenders the place. All this is correct, except the dreadful threat of consequences, which is nowhere recorded. But I fear that they were, too frequently, though most unjustly, attendant upon an obstinate defence. According to Holinshed, Henry's general orders were humane:—

"At his first coming on land he caused proclamation to be made, that no person should be so hardy, on pain of death, either to take anything out of any church that belonged to the same, or to hurt or to do any violence unto priests, women, or any such as should be found without weapon or armour and not ready to make resistance."†

In virtue of this proclamation, a man was hanged who stole a pix out of a church,‡ and this offender, according to Shakspeare, was our friend Bardolph.

* Act iii. Sc. 3.

† Hol., 72; Nicolas, 52.

‡ Hol. 77; Nicolas, 91.

" *Pistol.* Fortune is Bardolph's foe, and frowns on him;
For he hath stol'n a pix, and hang'd must be.
Let gallows gape for dog, and man go free,
And let not hemp his wind-pipe suffocate;
But Exeter hath given the doom of death,
For pix of little price."

The depreciation of the English by the French is a favourite topic, justified by all writers; and indeed the English, with whom they now had to fight, were greatly reduced by sickness and depri-vation. We have again the French court, when Henry's passage of the river Somme is announced; but the French leaders, among whom the Duke of Bourbon * now appears, still hold their enemy cheap.

" *Const. Dieu de battaile!* Where have they this mettle?
Is not their climate foggy, raw, and dull?
Or when, as in despite, the sun looks pale,
Killing their fruit with frowns? *Can sodden water,*
A drench for sur-rein'd jades, their barley-broth,
Decoct their cold blood to such valiant heat?
And shall our quick blood, spirited with wine,
Seem frosty?"

I do not understand this view of English diet. I always understood that our continental neighbours reproached us with the *solidity* rather than

* Maternal uncle to King Charles the Sixth.

with the spareness of our food; and their light wines are generally compared, not with thin broth, but with potent ale; nor can it be altogether denied that the French and English, even in the character of their bravery, do, in some sort, represent their respective sorts of diet.

Exeter appears to have been a favourite with our poet.

"The Duke of Exeter (says Fluellen) has very gallantly maintained the pridge: the French is gone off, look you, and there is gallant and most prave passages; marry, th' athversary was have possession of the pridge, but he is enforced to retire, and the Duke of Exeter is master of the pridge. I can tell your Majesty, the Duke of Exeter is a prave man."*

Exeter was a brave man, but there is no record of this particular feat of valour; nor indeed was he now with the army; he had been left in command at Harfleur.

"Come, uncle Exeter,
Go you and enter Harfleur; there remain,
And fortify it strongly 'gainst the French;
Use mercy to them all. For us, dear uncle,—
The winter coming on, and sickness growing
Upon our soldiers,—we'll retire to Calais."

After the surrender of Harfleur, Henry found his army so reduced by sickness, that he determined to return to England;† and, by an unaccountable,

* Act iii., Sc. 6. † Nicolas, 80, 242.

but eventually fortunate decision, he made for Calais (then in the possession of England), instead of re-embarking where he had landed. To effect his purpose, it was necessary to cross the river Somme,* but all the bridges were broken down, and it was not until the 19th of October that he succeeded in crossing by a ford;† in which passage he was unopposed. He had afterwards to cross the Ternoise; here there was a bridge which the French attempted to destroy, but the English were too quick for them;‡ it is only by Shakspeare that the Duke of Exeter was selected for this particular service. It was previously to this occupation of the bridge that Henry received a message from the enemy:—

"Mountjoy, king-at-arms, was sent to the King of England, to defy him as the enemy of France, and to tell him that he should shortly have battle. King Henry advisedly answered, 'Mine intent is to do as it pleaseth God. I will not seek your master, but if he, or his, seek me, I will meet them, God willing. If any of your nation attempt once to stop me in my journey now towards Calais, at their jeopardy be it; and yet I wish not any of you to be so unadvised as to be the occasion that I dye your tawny ground with your red blood.'" §

* Nicolas, 87, 95.

† Hol. 76.

‡ Hol., 77; Nicolas, 100.

§ Hol., 77.

This account, which is confirmed by contemporary writers,* is followed by Shakspeare,† except as to the purport of the message, which he makes to consist in a demand of *ransom*. Henry's answer is copied, with the addition of a little boasting, for which however he speedily rebukes himself.

" Turn thee back,
And tell thy king, I do not seek him now;
But could be willing to march on to Calais,
Without impeachment; for, to say the sooth,
(Though 'tis no wisdom to confess so much
Unto an enemy of craft and vantage,)
My people are with sickness much enfeebled;
My numbers lessen'd; and those few I have,
Almost no better than so many French;
Who, when they were in health, I tell thee, herald,
I thought, upon one pair of English legs
Did march three Frenchmen.—Yet, forgive me, God,
That I do brag thus!—This your air of France
Hath blown that vice in me; I must repent.
Go, therefore, tell thy master, here I am:
My ransom, is this frail and worthless trunk;
My army, but a weak and sickly guard;
Yet, God before, tell him we will come on,
Though France himself, and such another neighbour,
Stand in our way. There's for thy labour, Montjoy.
Go, bid thy master well advise himself:

* Nicolas, 97. † Act iii. Sc. 6.

If we may pass, we will; if we be hinder'd,
We shall your tawny ground with your red blood
Discolour: and so, Montjoy, fare you well.
The sum of all our answer is but this:
We would not seek a battle, as we are;
Yet, as we are, we say, we will not shun it:
So tell your master."

I well remember being, in childhood, familiar with the belief that one Englishman could *lick* three Frenchmen!

We have now* the French camp again, near Agincourt. The Dauphin, the Constable, the Duke of Orleans (who was certainly present), and a Lord Rambures (another name which is mentioned by Holinshed), are introduced, depreciating, in their turn, the English. The constable, however, who has now learned that the English live upon something stronger than barley-broth, allows them to be brave when well fed.

"The men do sympathize with mastiffs, in robustious and rough coming on, leaving their wits with their wives; and then give them *great meals of beef*, and iron and steel, and they will eat like wolves, and fight like devils."

Holinshed thus describes the eve of the battle:—

"They (the French) were lodged even in the way by which the Englishmen must pass towards Calais, and all

* Act iii. Sc. 7.

that night after their coming thither made great cheer, and were very merry, pleasant, and full of game. The Englishmen also of their parts were of good comfort, and nothing abashed of the matter, and yet they were both hungry, weary, sore travelled, and vexed with many cold diseases. Howbeit, reconciling themselves with God by housell and shrift, requiring assistance at His hands that is the only giver of victory, they determined rather to die than to yield or flee."*

Again—

"The Frenchmen in the meanwhile, as though they were sure of victory, made great triumphs for the captives, had determined before how to divide the spoil, and the soldiers, the night before, had *played* (*for*) *the Englishmen at dice*: The noblemen had devised a chariot, wherein they might convey the king captive to the city of Paris, crying to their soldiers, 'Haste you to the spoil, glory, and honour:' little weening (God wot) how soon their brags should be blown away." †

Let us now hear Shakspeare's description:—

"*Cho*. From camp to camp, through the foul womb
of night,
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fixed centinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch:
Fire answers fire; and through their paly flames
Each battle sees the other's umber'd face:

* Hol., 78. † Hol., 80.

Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs
Piercing the night's dull ear; and from the tents
The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
With busy hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.
The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll,
And (the third hour of drowsy morning named)
Proud of their numbers, and secure in soul,
The confident and over-lusty French
Do the low-rated English play at dice;
And chide the cripple tardy-gaited night,
Who, like a foul and ugly witch, doth limp
So tediously away. The poor condemn'd English,
Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires
Sit patiently, and inly ruminate
The morning's danger; and their gesture sad,
Investing lank-lean cheeks, and war-worn coats,
Presenteth them unto the gazing moon
So many horrid ghosts. O, now, who will behold
The royal captain of this ruin'd band,
Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,
Let him cry—*Praise and glory on his head!*
For forth he goes, and visits all his host;
Bids them good morrow, with a modest smile;
And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.
Upon his royal face there is no note,
How dread an army has enrounded him;
Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour
Unto the weary and all-watch'd night;

But freshly looks, and overbears attaint,
With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty;
That every wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks:
A largess universal, like the sun,
His liberal eye doth give to every one,
Thawing cold fear. Then, mean and gentle all,
Behold, as may unworthiness define,
A little touch of Harry in the night."

On the scenes which follow, between the king and Sir Thomas Erpingham, Pistol, and the three soldiers, and on the king's soliloquy upon the painful and burthensome incidents of greatness, I have no historical criticism; they are excellent in their way. But his concluding appeal to the Almighty must be noticed, as referring to some circumstances of history.

" O God of battles! steel my soldiers' hearts,
Possess them not with fear, take from them now
The sense of reckoning, lest the opposed numbers
Pluck their hearts from them!—Not to-day, O Lord!
O not to-day, think not upon the fault
My father made in compassing the crown!
I Richard's body have interred new;
And on it have bestow'd more contrite tears
Than from it issued forced drops of blood.
Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,
Who twice a day their withered hands hold up

Toward heaven, to pardon blood; and I have built
Two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests
Sing still for Richard's soul. More will I do:
Though all that I can do is nothing worth;
Since that my penitence comes after all,
Imploring pardon."

The reinterment of the body of Richard II., "with all funeral dignity suitable to his estate," is mentioned by Holinshed.*

In the next scene, which again takes us to the French camp, where the over-confident commanders continued their boastful anticipations of victory over the half-famished English, the poet has introduced a circumstance very natural in itself;—

"*Constable.* Hark! how our steeds for present service neigh!"

But it is curious that one of the narratives, written by a person present with the English army, says that—

"On that night, of all the host of France, scarcely a horse was heard to neigh. I know it for a truth, from Messire John, the bastard of Varoin, Lord of Forestel, for he was in that army on the part of the French, and I was in the other on the part of the English." †

* Hol. 62. Otterb. 274.

† St. Remy, in Nicolas, 108 and 249.

Returning to the English camp, Shakspeare introduces Bedford, Exeter, and Westmoreland among the commanders present; though Bedford had been left as Regent in England, and Exeter was in command at Harfleur. Westmoreland was at his post as Warden of the Scottish marches;* to him, therefore, is improperly ascribed the wish for more men from England, which Shakspeare found in Holinshed. Contemporaries say, that it was uttered by Sir Walter Hungerford.†

"It is said that as the king heard one of the host utter his wish to another, thus:—'I would to God there were with us now so many good soldiers as are at this hour within England!' He answered, 'I would not wish a man more here than I have! We are, indeed, in comparison with the enemies, but a few; but if God of his clemency do favour us and our just cause (as I trust he will), we shall speed well enough. But let no man ascribe victory to our own strength and might, but only to God's assistance, to whom I have no doubt we shall worthily have cause to give thanks therefore. And if so be that for our offences' sakes we shall be delivered into the hands of our enemies, the less number we be, the less damage shall the realm of England sustain; but if we should fight in trust of multitude of men, and so get the victory (our minds being

* Nicolas, p. 342.

† The first Lord Hungerford. Nicolas, 241.

prone to pride), we should thereupon, peradventure, ascribe the victory not so much to the gift of God as to our own puissance, and thereby provoke his high indignation and displeasure against us; and, if the enemy get the upper hand, then should our realm and country suffer more damage, and stand in further danger. But, be you of good comfort, and show yourselves valiant. God and our just quarrel shall defend us, and deliver these, our proud adversaries, with all the multitude of them which you see (or, at the least, the most of them), into our hands.' "*

This passage, which is found nearly word for word in Elmham,† produced a well-known speech from King Henry.

" What's he that wishes so?
My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin:
If we are mark'd to die, we are enough
To do our country loss; and, if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost:
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
But, if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.
No 'faith, my coz, wish not a man from England;

* Hol. 80. † P. 61; and see Nicolas, 242.

God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour,
As one man more, methinks, would share from me,
For the best hope I have. O do not wish one more:
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through the host,
That he, which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company,
That fears his fellowship to die with us."

What follows should, perhaps, have been uttered after the battle; but I will not curtail this speech, which is one of those by which English youth were, in the days of Shakspeare's more exclusive ascendancy, excited to warlike feelings.

" This day is call'd the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day and comes safe home
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his friends,
And say—to-morrow is St. Crispian:
Then will he strip his sleeve, and show his scars,
And say, these wounds I had on Crispin's day.
Old men forget, yet shall not all forget,
But they'll remember such advantages,
What feats they did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in their mouth as household words—
Henry the King, Bedford and Exeter,

Warwick* and Talbot,† Salisbury and Gloster,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.
This story shall the good man teach his son,
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
But we in it shall be remember'd.
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers:
For he, to-day, that sheds his blood with me,
Shall be my brother, be he ne'er so vile;
This day shall gentle his condition.
And gentlemen in England, now a-bed,
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here;
And hold their manhoods cheap, while any speaks,
That fought with us upon St. Crispin's day."

Johnson, after observing upon this speech, that Henry prays like a Christian, and swears like a heathen, reflects morally that—

"We are apt to promise to ourselves a more lasting memory than the changing state of human things admits. This prediction is not verified; the feast of Crispin‡ passes by without any mention of Agincourt.

* I have already said that Bedford and Exeter were not at Agincourt, neither was Warwick, having gone home on sick leave from Harfleur.

† I presume that this was Gilbert Lord Talbot, uncle of the first Earl of Shrewsbury; but it may have been Sir William Talbot. See Nicolas, p. 40, 127-8.

‡ I am told by Sir Harris Nicolas, that at Stroud, near Rochester, there is an old public-house with the sign of *St. Crispin and Crispianus*.

Late events obliterate the former: the civil wars have left in this nation scarcely any tradition of more ancient history." *

Though it is true that we do not think particularly of Agincourt on the 25th of October, this famous battle cannot be said to have passed out of memory; and I should say that we are generally more familiar with it than with the military events of the civil war. Shakspeare, no doubt, has tended to realize the prediction which he imagines. It does not often happen to England to fight a land battle of the highest importance and consequences. Between Agincourt and Blenheim there was, perhaps, no battle to be compared to either of them. And until the succession of victories, crowned by Waterloo, put them out of their heads, Englishmen were accustomed to boast of Agincourt† and Blenheim. The field of Naseby, however decisive, is regarded in quite a different light.

It is not exactly known what was the nature or

* Bosw. 417.

† Yes—*Agincourt* may be forgot,
And Crecy be an unknown spot,
And Blenheim's name be new;
But still in story and in song,
For many an age remember'd long,
Shall live the towers of Hougoumont
And field of Waterloo."

Walter Scott's "Waterloo."

extent of the privilege in respect of armorial bearings to which Shakspeare alludes in the line about *gentling* the condition of Henry's companions in arms. But it is a matter of authentic record, that when the king, a few years afterwards, forbade the assumption of coats of arms without due authority, he exempted "those who bore arms with him at the battle of Agincourt."*

The poet follows Holinshed in relating one more effort on the part of the French to induce Henry to ransom himself out of the danger in which he stood. When the king answered, in the sense of Holinshed,†

"Bid them achieve me, and then sell my bones."

Holinshed is also followed in the appointment of the Duke of York to the command of the van. "He appointed a vaward, of the which he made Captain, Edward Duke of York, who of an haughty courage had desired that office."

A slight circumstance induces a belief that Shakspeare's materials were not confined to Holinshed.

"*York*. My lord, most humbly *on my knee* I beg
The leading of the vaward.
K. Henry. Take it, brave York."

* Nicolas, 169. † Hol., 80.

In a poem of the fifteenth century, attributed to Lydgate, we read—

"The Duke of York then full soon,
Before our king *he fell on knee.*
My liege lord, *grant me a boon*
For His love that on cross did die!
The foreward that you this day grant me,
To be before you in the field:
By my banner, slain I will be,
Or I will turn my back, or me yield."*

It is not easy to represent a battle on the stage, and Shakspeare gives us nothing besides *alarums and excursions*, except the capture of a French soldier by Pistol.† Between this scene and the next the victory is won, and the French princes and commanders are introduced, lamenting their defeat. The victors then appear, when the death of the Duke of York and the Earl of Suffolk‡ is announced. These noblemen were certainly slain in the battle:§—the particulars are Shakspeare's own.

The king is interrupted in his lamentations over these two brave soldiers.

* Nicolas, 320. † Act iv. Sc. 4.

‡ Michael de la Pole, third Earl, who had very recently succeeded his father, who died at Harfleur.

§ Hol., 83; Nicolas, 264.

" But, hark! what new alarm is this same?
The French have reinforced their scatter'd men:—
Then *every soldier kill his prisoners:*
Give the word through,"

And then enter Fluellen and Gower, who thus account for this fatal order.

" *Fluellen.* Kill the poys and the luggage! 'tis expressly against the laws of arms: 'tis as arrant a piece of knavery, mark you now, as can be desired in the world, now. In your conscience now, is it not?

" *Gower.* 'Tis certain, there's not a boy left alive; and the cowardly rascals, that ran away from the battle, have done this slaughter. Besides, they have burn'd or carried away all that was in the king's tent; wherefore the king, most worthily, has caused every soldier to cut his prisoner's throat. O, 'tis a gallant king!"

And the king, re-entering soon afterwards, is made to say—

" I was not angry since I came to France
Until this instant.—Take a trumpet, herald;
Ride thou unto the horsemen on yon hill;
If they will fight with us, bid them come down,
Or void the field; they do offend our sight:
If they'll do neither, we will come to them;
And make them skirr away, as swift as stones
Enforced from the old Assyrian slings:
Besides, *we'll cut the throats of those we have;*

And not a man of them, that we shall take,
Shall taste our mercy :—go, and tell them so."

This is Shakspeare's version of the most lamentable incident of the battle of Agincourt, by which, in the opinion of many, the fame of the victorious Henry has been tarnished. I should, perhaps, rather say, these are Shakspeare's *versions*, for the order to kill prisoners is twice given, and the king's expressed motive is not in either case such as that which his officer assigns. Nothing can illustrate better than these passages the mode in which Shakspeare wrote his historical plays.

Holinshed gives two accounts. He tells us, first, that about

" Six hundred French horsemen, which were the first that fled, hearing that the English tents and pavilions were a good way distant from the army, without any sufficient guard to defend the same, either upon a covetous meaning to gain by the spoil, or upon a desire to be revenged, entered upon the king's camp, and there spoiled the hails, robbed the tents, broke up chests, and carried away caskets, and slew such servants as they found to make any resistance. . . . . But when the outcry of the lackeys and boys which ran away for fear of the Frenchmen thus spoiling the camp, came to the king's ears, he, doubting lest his enemies should gather together again, and begin a new field, and mistrusting further that the prisoners would be an aid to

his enemies, or the very enemies to their takers indeed, if they were suffered to live, contrary to his accustomed gentleness, commanded, by sound of trumpet, that every man (upon pain of death) should incontinently kill his prisoner."

The Chronicler describes the lamentable slaughter that ensued, and adds:—

"Some write, that the king perceiving his enemies in one part to assemble together, as though they meant to give a new battle, for preservation of the prisoners, sent to them an herald, commanding them either to depart out of his sight, or else to come forward at once and give battle; promising herewith, that if they did offer to fight again, not only those prisoners which his people already had taken, but also so many of them as in this new conflict which they thus attempted should fall into his hands, should die the death without redemption. The Frenchmen, fearing the sentence of so terrible a decree, without further delay parted out of the field."

Shakspeare takes both accounts. Contemporary historians do not make the case quite clear; but I think that it is established that there was an actual attack upon the baggage and the "boys," who were left as its only guard; and, probably, the English troops were quite incompetent to keep their prisoners safe, and, at the same time, to resist a fresh attack.* And it is to be observed, that

* See Nicolas, 124; and Tyler, ii. 169.

Henry countermanded his order so soon as the danger appeared to be over; and that the French writers support Holinshed's averment, that the ringleaders in the attack upon the baggage were afterwards punished by their own chiefs.*

Mountjoy now comes again, no longer for ransom, but for leave to assist and bury their dead. And in the enumeration of French, slain and taken prisoners, Holinshed is closely followed. This Chronicler gives two estimates of the English loss, of which Shakspeare selects the lower and more improbable, which states it at twenty-five persons; though Holinshed himself says that those writers are of greater credit who estimate the loss at 500 or 600 persons. Of commanders, besides those I have named, there are mentioned—

"Sir Richard Ketley,† Davy Gam, Esquire."

Of this Welsh squire it is related, that when questioned as to the number of the enemy, he answered, "My liege, there are enough to be slain, enough to be taken prisoners, and enough to run away."‡

It is in one of the comic scenes that the king

* Fenin, in Petitot, viii. 276; Barante, iv. 249; Nicolas, 129; Laboureur, in Nic. 274.

† The name appears to be Kighley. See Nicolas, 128, &c.

‡ Tyler, ii. 185. From *tradition*, as it appears to me.

alludes to his personal contest with the Duke of Alençon. "When Alençon and myself were down together."*

There are various accounts of this rencounter, but all agree that these two chiefs were personally engaged.†

This fourth act closes with the king's humble attribution of the victory to God only; to Henry's Christian piety, in every stage of his expedition, there is abundant testimony.†

The chorus to the fifth act conveys the king home:—

"So swift a pace has thought, that even now
You may imagine him upon Blackheath;
Where that his lords desire him, to have borne
His bruised helmet, and his bended sword,
Before him, through the city: he forbids it,
Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride;
Giving full trophy, signal, and ostent,
Quite from himself, to God. But now, behold,
In the quick forge and working-place of thought,
How London doth pour out her citizens!
The mayor, and all his brethren, in best sort,—
Like to the senators of antique Rome,
With the plebeians swarming at their heels,—
Go forth and fetch their conquering Cæsar in."

* Act iv. Sc. 7.
† Nicolas, 127. Shakspeare follows Holinshed, 81.
‡ See Tyler, 32; Elmham, 164, &c.; Hol., 84.

This is from Holinshed:

"The Mayor of London, and the aldermen, appear in orient grained scarlet, and four hundred commoners clad in beautiful murry, well mounted and trimly horsed, with rich collars and great chains, met the king on Blackheath, rejoicing at his return; and the clergy of London, with rich crosses, sumptuous capes, and massive censers, received him at St. Thomas of Walerengs, with solemn procession. The king, like a great and sober personage, and as one remembering from whom all victories are sent, seemed little to regard such vain pomp and shows as were in triumphant sort devised for his welcoming home from so prosperous a journey, insomuch that he would not suffer his helmet to be carried with him, whereby might have appeared to the people the blows and dents that were to be seen in the same; neither would he suffer any ditties to be made and sung by minstrels of his glorious victory, for that he would wholly have the praise and thanks altogether given to God."

Chorus here makes a comparison:—

" As, by a lower but by loving likelihood,
Were now the general of our gracious empress,
(As, in good time, he may,) from Ireland coming,
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
How many would the peaceful city quit,
To welcome him? much more, and much more cause,
Did they this Harry."

If this play was written, as Mr. Malone conjectures, in 1599,* it is unquestionably probable that the allusion here is to the Earl of Essex; but that is not *certain*. The dates would suit Mountjoy, who accepted the office of Lord Deputy after Essex's return, and who was much more successful in *broaching* rebellion. I think that Shakspeare's lines, which are supposed to furnish an instance of the devotion of poets to the unaccountable Essex, are surely only moderately complimentary; if, indeed, they are not intended as a *rebuke* of popular applause bestowed upon an unworthy object. Chorus goes on:—

> "The emperor's coming in behalf of France,
> To order peace between them, and omit
> All the occurrences, whatever chanced,
> Till Harry's back-return again to France."

Perhaps the readers of Shakspeare are not generally aware of the multitude of events, and the long periods, which they are called upon to *imagine*. The impression conveyed by the play is, that the victory of Agincourt was speedily followed by

* Bosw., ii. 359. It is partly by this passage, supposed to allude to Essex, that the date is fixed. But though the argument is circular, I believe it to be sound, for the play was entered and printed in 1600.

the marriage of Henry and Catherine, and peace between the two kingdoms; whereas, in fact, nearly five years elapsed before those events were accomplished.

The Emperor Sigismund came over to England, and went also to France, but unsuccessfully endeavoured to mediate a peace.* The war was carried on languidly, but much in favour of Henry, until the year 1419, when the Duke of Burgundy made a new attempt to bring about a peace; † and this is the earliest event, after the battle of Agincourt, which is mentioned by Shakspeare, who, however, confounds the meeting which occurred between the two courts near Meulan with that which subsequently took place at Troyes.

The poet introduces (at Troyes) both the kings, and Queen Isabel of Bavaria, wife of the French monarch, who was himself absent on account of his constitutional malady. The Princess Catherine is also brought on the stage, as well as the Duke of Burgundy.‡

* Hol., 85; Elmh. 73; Tyler, 204.

† Hol., 107; Elmh. 212.

‡ Jean Sanspeur, the same whom Henry the Fourth assisted. Of English nobles are named, Bedford, Gloucester, Exeter, Warwick, and Westmoreland. I am not enabled to say whether these were, or were not, present either at Meulan or Troyes.

"The said Lady Katharine (says Holinshed) was brought by her mother only to the intent that the King of England, beholding her excellent beauty, should be so inflamed and rapt in her love, that, to obtain her to his wife, should the sooner agree to a gentle peace and loving concord."

But Henry was not so easily caught, for Shakspeare is warranted by the Chronicle in making him tell Burgundy, who had set forth the evils of war—

"If, Duke of Burgundy, you would the peace
Whose want gives growth to the imperfections
Which you have cited, *you must buy that peace*
With full accord to all our just demands."

"Cousin, we will have your king's daughter, *and all things that we demand with her*, or we will drive your king and you out of his realm." *

Shakspeare brings about his *dénouement* by making the French king agree to everything; but in truth this negotiation, in which the Duke of Burgundy was concerned, was broken off; the war was renewed, and it was not until 1420 (after the murder of the Duke of Burgundy †) that the meeting was held at Troyes.

There is contemporary authority for the *salute*

* Hol., 108: Monstrelet, ii. 232; Elmham, 216-226.

† John Duke of Burgundy was succeeded in 1419 by his son, Philip Count of Charolois.

which Henry bestowed upon Catherine, but time and place are mis-stated. It was given in the first interview at Meulan, and not in the presence of one lady in waiting only (as in Shakspeare), but before the two assembled courts; so publicly, indeed, as to cause her to blush deeply, and to be handed to her tent by the Duke of Burgundy.*

"Uncle Exeter," † whom Shakspeare makes withdraw to negotiate with the French king, was in fact sent to him at Troyes, in company with the young Duke of Burgundy. At Troyes there was a meeting of all parties, being the second of the two which Shakspeare confounds; here the treaty was concluded, by which Henry was to succeed to the crown of France, after the death of Charles the Sixth, and the marriage was celebrated in June 1420. ‡

"This play (says Johnson) has many scenes of high dignity, and many of easy merriment. The character of the king is well supported, except in his courtship, where he has neither the vivacity of Hal, nor the grandeur of Henry. . . . . The lines given to the

* Elm. 222; Monst. ii. 230. Tyler gives a full account of the meeting at Meulan, but no authority. See Sismondi, xii. 572.

† Exeter is named by Holinshed (113) as well as Shakspeare, but his companions are different.

‡ Sismondi, xii. 597; Elmham, 266; Monst., 277.

chorus have many admirers, but the truth is, that, in them, a little may be praised, and much must be forgiven. . . . . The great defect of this play is the emptiness and narrowness of the last act, which a very little diligence might have easily avoided."

The remarks upon Henry are just, including the condemnation of the courtship scenes, which, as being imaginary, and not well imagined, I have not noticed. Henry the Fifth is justly painted as a brave and generous man, affable and of popular manners; though Sismondi deems otherwise of him, chiefly because he was peremptory in his language to the politic and shifty Duke of Burgundy.* But Johnson scarcely does justice to the chorus. Of the introduction to the fourth act, Tom Campbell says, "The description of the night before the battle of Agincourt will be repeated by the youth of England, when our children's children shall be grey with age." I am afraid that my truly poetical friend describes what ought to be, not what is or will be.

* Sismondi, xii. 572.

HENRY VI.—Part I.

I now come to the worst of the historical plays, the three parts of Henry the Sixth. It has been doubted whether Shakspeare wrote any one of these, and it was the decided opinion of Malone and Farmer, from which, however, Steevens and Johnson dissented, that he did not write, or even re-model and adopt, the first part. I will not undertake to decide between these two pairs of critics; nor indeed have I looked sufficiently into the evidence to justify a strong opinion. I am afraid that a play may contain a great deal that is bad, and still be the work of our poet; but, whether five acts of diversified writing, with scarcely one passage of eminent merit, can be Shakspeare's work, is more doubtful. I attach considerable importance to Malone's remark* upon the dissimilar *versification* of this piece from that of the undoubted plays. Of this first play, the rhythm is neither appropriate nor agreeable.

* Bosw., xviii. 4; and 560.

On historical inaccuracies or contradictions no stress is to be laid. I am surprised that Malone, who has detected so many mistakes, should think it improbable that Shakspeare should in such matters be inconsistent with himself. As to the poet's carelessness, I do not think that Dr. Johnson overrates it.

I am afraid that the defects of the play must necessarily affect my commentary; and I really cannot find one good passage to relieve the unavoidable dulness of minute criticism.

Since, however, these plays are included in all editions of Shakspeare's works, and are read with the rest, by the youth of England, and I presume of Germany, it is equally my business to examine them, whether he wrote them or not. And let it not be supposed that I decide the question when I speak of the author as *Shakspeare*.

The First Part of Henry the Sixth opens with the corpse of Henry the Fifth lying in state in Westminster Abbey, surrounded by the Dukes of Bedford, Gloucester, and Exeter; the Earl of Warwick,* and the Bishop of Winchester, well known as Cardinal Beaufort.†

* The *dramatis personæ* contains only one Earl of Warwick; but this Warwick is the Beauchamp of the former plays; whereas he who takes a more prominent part presently is the successor, Neville, who became earl in 1439.

† It can hardly be necessary to say that Henry Beaufort

Henry died in France on the 31st of August, 1422; and was buried in Westminster Abbey, with great pomp; and, doubtless, amidst the lamentations of his nobles and people. But Shakspeare would have done much better had he versified the panegyric of Holinshed, instead of giving such lines as these :—

" *Gloucester*. England ne'er had a king until his time.
Virtue he had, deserving to command;
His brandish'd sword did blind men with his beams;
His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings;
His sparkling eyes, replete with wrathful fire,
More dazzled and drove back his enemies,
Than mid-day sun, fierce bent against their faces."

How much better is this :—

"This Henry was a king, of life without spot; a prince whom all men loved, and of none disdained; a captain against whom fortune never frowned, nor mischance once spurned; whose people, him so severe a justicer, both loved and obeyed; and so humane withal, that he left no offence unpunished, nor friendship unrewarded; a terror to rebels, and suppresser of sedition, his virtues notable, his qualities most praiseworthy.

"In strength and nimbleness of body, from his

was one of the sons of John of Gaunt, by Catharine Swinford, legitimated (except as to the crown) by Act of parliament. Thomas, Duke of Exeter, was another; they were *great* uncles to the king.

youth, few to him comparable; for in wrestling, leaping, and running, no man well able to compare. In casting of great iron bars and heavy stones, he excelled commonly all men, never shrinking at cold, nor slothful for heat, and when he most laboured, his head commonly uncovered; no more weary of harness than a light cloak: very valiantly abiding at needs both hunger and thirst; so manful of mind, as never seen to winch at a wound, or to smart at the pain, nor to turn his nose from evil savours, nor to close his eyes from smoke or dust; no man more moderate in eating or drinking, with diet not delicate, but rather more meet for men of war, than for princes or tender stomachs.

"Every honest person was permitted to come to him sitting at meal, where either secretly or openly to declare his mind. High and weighty causes as well between men of war and others he would gladly hear, and either determined them himself, or else for end committed them to others. He slept very little, but that very soundly, insomuch that when his soldiers sung at nights, or minstrels played, he then slept fastest. Of courage invincible, of purpose immutable; so wise-hardy always, as fear was banished from him: at every alarum, he first in armour and foremost in ordering. In time of war, such was his providence, bounty, and hap, as he had true intelligence, not only what his enemies did, but what they said and intended; of his devices and purposes, few before the thing was at the point to be done should be made privy.

"He had such knowledge in ordering and guiding an army, with such a gift to encourage his people, that the Frenchmen had constant opinion he could never be vanquished in battle. Such wit, such prudence, and such policy withal, that he never enterprised anything before he had fully debated and forecast all the main chances that might happen; which done, with all diligence and courage he set his purpose forward. What policy he had in finding present remedies for sudden mischiefs, and what engines in serving himself and his people in sharp distresses, were it not that by his acts they did plainly appear, hard were it by words to make them credible. Wantonness of lies and thirst of avarice had he quite quenched in him; virtues, indeed, in such an estate of sovereignty, youth, and power, as very rare, so right commendable in the highest degree. So staid of mind and countenance besides, that never jolly or triumphant for victory, nor sad or damp for loss or misfortune, For bountifulness and liberality no man more free, gentle and frank in bestowing rewards to all persons, according to their deserts; for his saying was, that he never desired money to keep, but to give and spend.

"Although this story properly serves not for theme of praise or dispraise, yet what in brevity may well be remembered in truth would not be forgotten by sloth, were it but only to remain as a spectacle for magnanimity to have always in eye, and to have encouragement to nobles in honourable enterprises. Known

it be therefore, of person and form was this prince rightly representing his heroical effects; of stature and proportion tall and manly; rather lean than gross; somewhat long-necked, and black-haired; of countenance amiable; eloquent and grave was his speech, and of great grace and power to persuade; for conclusion, a majesty was he, that both lived and died a pattern in prince-hood, a load-star in honour, and mirror of magnificence. The more highly exalted in his life, the more deeply lamented at his death, and famous to the world alway."*

This is taken from "Maister Hall," but *his* authority is not stated. Monstrelet, in much less detail, and more moderation, gives a similar character; as does also the contemporary Walsingham. None of these writers say any thing more unfavourable of Henry than that he was "a severe justicer;" and as it is not alleged that his judgments were unjust, this is not a very heavy charge.

In this first scene we have a commencement of the bickerings between Gloucester and Cardinal Beaufort, which occupy so much of the play. The Cardinal ascribes Henry's success to the prayers of the church which he favoured; Gloucester maligns both the church and the Cardinal, who rejoins:—

"*Cardinal.* Whate'er we are, thou art protector;
And lookest to command the prince and realm.

* Hol. iii. 133.

Thy wife is proud; she holdeth thee in awe,
More than God, or religious churchmen may."

A succession of messengers now enter, announcing "sad tidings out of France"—the loss of Guienne, Champagne, Rheims, and Orleans, Paris, Gisors, and Poictiers; the coronation of the dauphin (Charles the Seventh) as King of France; and lastly, the defeat and capture of Lord Talbot at the siege of Orleans; and the weak state of the army under the Earl of Salisbury.* And one of the messengers charges the losses in France upon the divisions in the English council.

"Among the soldiers this is muttered;—
That here you maintain several factions,
And whilst a field should be dispatch'd and fought,
You are disputing of your generals.
One would have lingering wars with little cost;
Another would fly swift, but wanteth wings.
A third thinks, without expense at all,
By guileful fair words peace may be maintained."

The dialogue then gives a variety of circumstances:—

"*Exeter*. Remember, Lords, your oaths to Henry sworn,
Either to quell the dauphin utterly,
Or bring him in obedience to your yoke.

* Thomas de Montacute, seventh earl.

Gloucester. I'll to the Tower with all the haste I can,
To view the artillery and munition,
And then I will proclaim young Henry King.

Exeter. To Eltham will I, where the young king is,
Being ordained his special governor;
And for his safety there I'll best devise.

Winchester. Each hath his place and function to attend;
I am left out, for me nothing remains,
But long I will not be Jack-out-of-office;
The king from Eltham I intend to send,
And sit at chiefest stern of public weal."

Henry's dying injunctions, to which Exeter alludes, are properly given from Holinshed.

"When he saw them (the lords who attended him) pensive for his sickness, and great danger of life wherein he presently lay, he, with many grave, courteous, and pithy words, re-comforted them the best he could, and therewith exhorted them to be trusty and faithful unto his son, and to see that he might be well and virtuously brought up. And as concerning the rule and governance of his realms during the minority and young years of his said son, he willed them to join together in friendly love and concord, keeping continual peace and amity with the Duke of Burgundy, and *never to make treaty with Charles that called himself the Dauphin of Vienne, by the which any part either of the crown of France, or of the duchies of Normandy and Guienne, may be lessened or diminished*; and further, that *the Duke of Orleans* and

other princes should still remain prisoners, till his son came to lawful age, lest returning home again, they might kindle more fire in one day than might be quenched in three.

"He further advised them, that if they thought it necessary that it should be good to have his brother Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, to be protector of England during the non-age of his son; and his brother the Duke of Bedford, with the help of the Duke of Burgundy, to rule and to be Regent of France, commanding him with fire and sword to persecute the dauphin, till he had either brought him to reason and obeisance, or else to drive and expel him out of the realm of France. And here he protested to them, that neither the ambitious desire to enlarge his dominions, neither to purchase even renown and worldly fame, nor any other consideration had moved him to take the wars in hand, but only that in prosecuting his just title, he might in the end attain to a perfect peace, and come to enjoy those pieces of his inheritance which to him of right belonged; and that before the beginning of the same wars, he was fully persuaded by men both wise and of great holiness of life, that upon such intent he might and ought both begin the same wars and follow them till he had brought them to an end justly and rightly; and that without all danger of God's displeasure or peril of soul."*

These dying declarations, and the religious exercises which, as we learn from the same authority,

* Hol. 132.

attended the death-bed of Henry, might have extended Exeter's speech with good effect. But it must be observed, that the injunctions to persevering hostility are not to be found in the contemporary historians, who dwell much more upon the disclaimers of inordinate ambition and the submission to God's will.* The injunction, however, not to release the Duke of Orleans, was subsequently cited by Gloucester.

The anachronisms of the scene are great. It is true that Gloucester, on the death of his brother, assumed the administration of affairs; and was afterwards confirmed in it by parliament, with the title of protector. It is also matter of record that there were differences between him and the cardinal.

His colleagues in the council and in parliament put restrictions upon his power; and Beaufort, it is believed, was among those that opposed him. Here, therefore, there is only a little anticipation; I suspect that in the following lines, addressed by Beaufort to Gloucester, Shakspeare alluded to the second wife of the Duke, of whom we shall hear much presently.

* Holinshed refers to Titus Livius, who does not bear him out (p. 95); but Monstrelet and Polydore Vergil (not a contemporary) support him better; but see Elmham, 332. There is nothing in the Croyland continuation. I do not know whence Mr. Tyler (ii. 304) takes his version, which contains no charge against making peace with the dauphin.

"Thy wife is proud, she holdeth thee in awe,
More than God or religious churchmen may."

But it was only about this time, and probably not so soon as the funeral, that Gloucester married his first wife, a lady whose adventures, and those which she occasioned, are unnoticed by our dramatist, though more dramatic than those of Eleanor Cobham.

The first wife of Gloucester was Jacqueline of Hainault, niece to the Duke of Bavaria, and married to the Duke of Brabant. Not liking her husband, she ran away from him, and came to England on speculation; where Gloucester married her, and got possession of her vast inheritance. A quarrel ensued between the two dukes; the Duke of Burgundy assisted Brabant, who was his cousin; the people of Mons gave Jacqueline up to Burgundy, but she got away to Holland, "where she was obeyed as countess of the country." All this involved that duke in a quarrel with Gloucester, whom he challenged to single combat; the Duke of Bedford, whose wife was sister to the Duchess of Burgundy, and who desired much to retain Burgundy as a friend, in vain endeavoured to conciliate; and the English parliament thought proper to interfere, to prevent the duel.* As Shakspeare

* Rolls, iv. 277. See Sismondi, xiii. 126. Barante, v. 128.

alludes to none of these transactions, I shall only add, that they unquestionably tended to estrange the Duke of Burgundy from the English alliance.*

The greater part of the events which are announced by the messengers took place long afterwards. King Charles the Sixth did not die, nor did his son assume the title, until October. Nor were the places enumerated lost at this time, or all at once: indeed, the events of the war were for some time favourable to England. The surprise of Port Meulan, on the Seine, was followed by the more important successes under Salisbury;† and the two important battles of Crevant and Verneuil were gained by the Duke of Bedford in the summer of 1424; of these, Shakspeare takes no notice, though they are fully described by Holinshed; and the French army was so signally defeated at the latter, that it was compared to the battles of Crecy and Agincourt.‡ It was not until the bastard of Orleans (Dunois) gained the battle of Montargis, that the French had any material advantage.

* Monstrelet, 307, 406, 428, &c.

† It may be noted that Lord *Poynings* and Sir John *Fastolfe* are mentioned among the officers who served under Salisbury. Hol., 137.

‡ Hol. 142. Sismondi, xiii. 20, 34. Monst., ii., 419, 471. See Mackintosh's Hist. of England, i. 369. The Duke of Alençon was taken prisoner; and not ransomed until 1426.

Above all, Talbot was not taken prisoner till the year 1429, when he was defeated at Patay.*

No trace of divisions affecting the success of the war at this period is to be found in Shakspeare's usual authority.

"The Duke of Gloucester was ordained protector of England, who, taking upon him that office, called to him wise and grave counsellors, by whose advice he provided and took order as well for the good government of the realm, and subjects of the same at home, as also for the maintenance of the wars abroad and further conquest to be made in France, appointing valiant and expert captains, which should be ready when need required."

The same authority says,† that Winchester was appointed jointly with Exeter, to the custody of the young king's person. Shakspeare's usual authority, therefore, does not justify the complaint of Beaufort that he is the only "Jack-out-of-office." But, I believe, that in this instance, the play is more correct than the Chronicle; and that, at least in the first instance, Exeter was sole guardian of the minor king, or assisted only by some officers of the royal household.‡

The Duke of Bedford correctly styles himself

* Hol., 165. † P. 106.

‡ Tit. Liv., 95; Elmham, 333.

Regent of France; but I know not why he mentions St. George's day. Henry the Fifth died in August; and though some time must have elapsed in bringing the body with great ceremony to Westminster, the funeral must have been over long before the following April.

We have now, with the same contempt of dates, the French before Orleans; the Dauphin, Alençon,* Regnier,† rejoice at the capture of Talbot; they are then beaten by Salisbury, and the Maid of Orleans is introduced. The battle of Patay was, in truth, fought in 1429, some time after Joan's appearance in the field.

Salisbury came over in 1428‡ (after the death of the Duke of Exeter), obtained some successes before Orleans, which are those mentioned in scene iiii, and was killed, with Sir Thomas Gargrave, by a shot from the town, in the manner described in scene iv.§ Talbot was present, apparently under the command of Salisbury, who was succeeded by Suffolk; but the congratulations of the General on the delivery of the gallant soldier from a French prison are imaginary, as Talbot was not *taken*

* John, son of John who was killed at Agincourt.

† Duke of Anjou, of the royal family of France, and nominal King of Naples.

‡ Monst., ii. 484.

§ Ibid., 488.

until after Salisbury's death, nor released until the year 1431.

Shakspeare takes from Holinshed* the story with which everybody is familiar, of Joan knowing the Dauphin, whom she had never seen before, and choosing out a sword by description, from a chest of old iron.

In the delivery of Orleans by this mysterious person,† there is no very material departure from the Chronicle, except in the poetical license almost always adopted in such cases, of bringing Talbot and Joan into personal conflict. She entered into Orleans, and, after various conflicts, the English raised the siege.‡

But the recovery of Orleans by Talbot, with which the second act opens, is a stretch of the imagination, for it was not long after the abandonment of Orleans, that that eminent commander was defeated and taken,§ as I have said.

The story of the French being surprised, and leaping from the walls in their shirts, is, by Shakspeare, transferred to Orleans from Mans, where it happened, according to Holinshed. It would have been more fair to mention a somewhat similar occurrence, when the *English* were so "unready,"

* P. 163.

† The siege was raised on the 8th of May, 1429.

‡ Hol., 164.

§ June 18th, 1429.

as to be obliged "to flee in their pumps."* From the circumstance of the French being made to fly by a soldier who cries out *Talbot!* Malone infers that this play was founded on Hall, and other authorities, besides Holinshed, who was usually Shakspeare's. But, in truth, Holinshed says enough to justify the poet.

"His *only name* was and yet is dreadful to the French nation, and much renowned amongst all other people."†

I do not know where Shakspeare found the story of Talbot and the Countess of Auvergne.‡ There is nothing of it in Holinshed.

We next meet with the French before Rouen,§ into which important city the Maid of Orleans obtains entrance by the stratagem of disguising her soldiers as peasants bringing corn to market. For this improbable story I find no foundation, unless it be a story which Holinshed relates of the capture of *Evreux*, some time afterwards, by six strong fellows, apparelled like men of the country, with sacks and baskets, as carriers of corn and victuals.‖ Monstrelet¶ says that, after Joan's death, Rouen was nearly lost by treachery.

The Duke of Bedford is now brought in, sick:

* Hol., ii. 158—160.
† P. 158.
‡ Act ii. Sc. 2 and 3.
§ Act iii. Sc. 2.
‖ Hol., 198.
¶ Vol. iii. 30.

after a good deal of improbable and unprofitable talk, an action is fought, in which the English are victorious, and Rouen is recovered. Bedford dies, in his chair, at the moment of victory. Of all this I find no trace in the Chronicle, except that this brave duke died in September, 1435, and was buried at Rouen.* The Duke of Burgundy is made to cheer him in his dying moments: but the defection of that prince had, in truth, occurred upon inducements connected with the English part of our history to which I have referred, *before* the Duke of Bedford's death.† There is, therefore, a compound anachronism in the following scene, in which *Joan* is made to persuade Burgundy to separate himself from the English cause; and she asks, by way of exciting Burgundy to leave the English—

"Was not the Duke of Orleans thy foe?
And was he not in England prisoner?
But, when he heard he was thine enemy,
They set him free, without his ransom paid,
In spite of Burgundy and all his friends."

Now the release of the Duke of Orleans was an important occurrence in this reign, but it was not effected until some years after the defection of the

* Hol., 184. † Hol., 183; Monstr., iii. 92.

Duke of Burgundy. And this is clearly stated in Holinshed.

"So long as the Duke of Burgundy continued faithful to the King of England, it was not thought necessary to suffer the Duke of Orleans to be ransomed, lest, upon his deliverance, he would seek means to be revenged upon the Duke of Burgundy, for the old grudge and displeasure between their two families; and, therefore, such ransom was demanded from him as he was never able to pay. But, *after the Duke of Burgundy had broken his promise, and was turned to the French part*, the council of the King of England devised how to deliver the Duke of Orleans, that thereby they might displeasure the Duke of Burgundy."

The liberation of the Duke of Orleans was a symptom of the decreasing influence of the Duke of Gloucester, whose protest against it is recorded.* Modern historians have considered this as a trial of strength between Gloucester and the Cardinal,† and, it may fairly be inferred, that Beaufort was one of those who overruled the duke; but I know of no more particular authority. Monstrelet says, that Burgundy and Orleans, on this occasion, acted in concert.‡ The apprehension of this was one of Gloucester's objections.

* Rymer, x.; and see Paston Letters, i. 5.

† Lingard, v. 115.

‡ Vol. iii. 305. He says that Burgundy was surety for his ransom; but Rapin, from Rymer, denies this. v. 347.

And, in the imaginary action before Rouen, Sir John Fastolfe, of whose dastardly conduct we had heard so long ago as the funeral of Henry the Fifth, disgraces himself by flight. Neither in the first mention nor in this is the date correctly given.

We have now the young King Henry at Paris. Talbot is presented; Henry calls to mind the commendations of him which he had heard from Henry the Fifth; and, for his valiant deeds, creates him Earl of Shrewsbury.

The fourth act commences with the coronation of Henry, at Paris, as King of France. Fastolfe enters with a letter from the Duke of Burgundy. Talbot reproaches him with his cowardly flight, which is now correctly assigned to the battle of Patay, and tears the garter from his knee. Henry banishes him, in the choice terms of this play,

"Be *packing*, therefore, thou that wast a knight;*"

and charges the new earl to march against Burgundy, whose letter announces his reconciliation with Charles the Seventh.

Henry the Sixth really went into France in 1431, and was crowned on the 17th of December in that year, long before the death of Bedford, or the de-

* Sir H. Nicolas does not believe that Sir John's garter was taken from him.

fection of Burgundy, who was present and assisting at the ceremony. But Talbot did not obtain his well-earned promotion in the peerage till the year 1442,* nor was he present at this coronation, which occurred while he remained a prisoner. The play is also wrong in the enumeration of English lords present. Gloucester staid in England, administering the government. Exeter had died in 1426. York, Suffolk, Warwick, and Cardinal Beaufort *are* named in the Chronicle. Somerset is not mentioned there, but the then† duke of that title may, possibly, have been present.

The scene is now transferred to Talbot's camp before Bordeaux; passing over a period of more than twenty years, during which the English lost nearly the whole of their possessions in France; and, carrying the narrative nearly to the point at which the *fifth* act of the *second* part of the play commences. Talbot's expedition to Bordeaux occurred in the year 1453; and he went in consequence of an invitation from the citizens, and an intimation that Guienne and Gascony might be re-

* John Talbot, Lord Talbot, sixth baron (or twelfth, reckoning the barons by tenure) of that ancient family. The present earl of Shrewsbury is his lineal descendant and male heir.

† John Beaufort, third Earl of Somerset, second of John, eldest natural son of John of Gaunt. Collins. i. 222.

covered. He was admitted without resistance: the stout defiance of the "General," who appeared on the walls of Bordeaux, being an imagination of the poet. He is, however, correct in bringing Charles the Seventh with a strong force, by which he was defeated near Chatillon, and slain, together with his son, John Talbot.* The scene in which old Talbot endeavours to persuade his son to fly, and the young hero insists upon sharing the danger, is suggested by Holinshed.

"It is said that, after he perceived there was no remedy but present loss of the battle, he counselled his son, the Lord Lisle, to save himself by flight, since the same could not redound to any great reproach in him, this being the first journey in which he had been present. Many words he used to persuade him to have saved his life; but, nature so wrought in the son, that neither desire of life nor fear of death, could either cause him to shrink or convey himself out of the danger, and so there manfully ended his life with his said father."†

The incident is dramatic, but the author of this play has not dramatised it well; a part of the

* Sc. 2, 5, 6, 7. Hol., 235; Monstr., 553; Hall, 229. This son was his eldest son by his second wife Margaret, daughter of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and, by her mother, co-heiress of Lisle. He was created Viscount Lisle.

† Hol., 236.

scene is in a jingling rhyme, which, I believe, with Johnson,* to have been taken from another work: nor do I believe it to be Shakspeare's.

The Duke of York is introduced † on the plains of Gascony, complaining that, owing to the failure of Somerset ‡ in sending him a reinforcement, he is unable to succour Talbot. Somerset is introduced with his force in another part of Gascony, complaining, in his turn, of the rashness of the expedition planned by York and Talbot, and his inability to spare any part of his force, which, however, he at last promises to do, when it is too late, being pressed by Sir William Lucy,§ who goes backwards and forwards between the three commanders with ineffectual messages.

All that I can find respecting this quarrel between York and Somerset, *as affecting this campaign*, is a short passage in Holinshed.

"When the Duke of York had fastened his chain between these two strong pillars (the Earls of Salisbury

* Bosw., 122.

† Sc. 3. Richard Plantagenet, of whom more presently.

‡ Sc. 4. The Duke of Somerset was now Edmund, brother to the John before mentioned, who had died in 1443. Nicolas, ii. 592.

§ There was at this time a William Lucy of Charlcote, ancestor to the Sir Thomas Lucy whom Shakspeare is supposed to have ridiculed as Justice Shallow. Burke, iii. 98.

and Warwick), he, with his friends, wrought so effectuously, and handled his business so politicly, that the Duke of Somerset was arrested in the Queen's great chamber, and sent to the Tower of London, where he kept his Christmas without great solemnity: against whom, soon after, in open parliament, were laid divers and heinous articles of high treason, as well for the loss of Normandy, *as for the late mischance which happened in Guienne.*" *

Of this arrest we shall hear in the next play, but I find in parliamentary records, no accusation of Somerset by York subsequent to the year 1451, when he was charged with the loss of Normandy: the Guienne affair had not then occurred. Nor do I find that Somerset was in France at the time of Talbot's death.

After the battle, Sir William Lucy demands the dead bodies of the slain, and especially of Talbot, whom he thus describes:—

"The great Alcides of the field,
Valiant Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury;
Created, for his rare success in arms,
Great Earl of Washford,† Waterford, and Valence;

* Hol., 238; year 1454-5.

† Talbot was created Earl of Wexford and Waterford in 1446. Wexford was sometimes written *Washford*, even so late as the time of Sir William Temple; see my Memoirs of him, i. 384.

Lord Talbot* of Goodrig and Urchinfield,
Lord Strange† of Blackmere, Lord Verdun‡ of Alton,
Lord Cromwell of Wingfield, Lord Furnival‡ of Sheffield,
The thrice victorious Lord of Falconbridge;
Knight of the noble order of St. George,‡
Worthy St. Michael, and the golden fleece;
Great Mareshal to Henry the Sixth,
Of all his wars within the realms of France."

This enumeration of titles and honours is exactly conformable to a monumental inscription, said by Brooke, the herald, to have existed at Rouen; but this herald was imposed upon, and the enumeration is erroneous in the particulars which I have distinguished.

It is as difficult to imagine how Shakspeare got that part of this "stately style" which is correct, as to account for its errors; I have made out the baronies, by the help of Sir Harris Nicolas, but there was no such aid in Shakspeare's time, and I

* Richard Lord Talbot, father of the Earl, had been summoned to parliament as Lord Talbot de Godricke Castle (Goderich), in 1837. I find nothing of Urchinfield.

† Shrewsbury derived this barony from his mother, heiress of John Lord Strange.

‡ The Earl married Maud de Neville, heiress of Thomas, fifth Lord Furnival, and was summoned by that barony in right of his wife. That Thomas, or a former Baron Furnival, had married the heiress of Verdun, whence that title may be supposed to have descended through the Furnivals to the Talbots.

cannot find the enumeration in any printed book to which Shakspeare had access.*

In the next act† the chronology makes an attempt to right itself, by carrying us back to the year 1436, when soon after the death of the Duke of Bedford, the Parisians returned under the allegiance of their native king.‡

> "*Charles.* 'Tis said the stout Parisians do revolt,
> And turn again unto the warlike French."

But then comes an event which happened in the year 1430. A messenger announces—

> "The English army that divided was
> Into two parts, is now conjoined in one,
> And means to give you battle presently."

Though I cannot identify the operation here referred to, the poet intended it for one that immediately preceded the capture of Joan, which occurs in the next scene, after a fight "hand to hand" with York. According to Holinshed, this important event occurred in a slight affair; and,

* I suppose that Brooke's work is the tract printed *after* this play, in which Malone says he found the titles taken from the monumental plate at Rouen; but Talbot was buried at Whitchurch, in Shropshire, where there is, or was, a correct description of him. — See Vincent upon Brooke, p. 451-4, and Camden's Shropshire, i. 659.

† Act v. Sc. 2.

‡ Hol. 186; Sismondi xiii. 273.

certainly, York had no part in it; and the Duke of Burgundy, whom the Joan of the play converts to the French side, commanded the force by a party of which she was made prisoner.*

There is, I fear, good historical authority for the condemnation of this singular woman to be burned as a witch.† But this barbarous sentence was passed and executed under the regency of the Duke of Bedford.

I now return to the domestic affairs related in this play. We have already heard of Gloucester's intention to look to the condition of the Tower of London. He now comes‡ to execute this intention; but, though he is announced as Lord Protector, Woodville, the governor, refuses him admittance, in consequence of orders from the Cardinal of Winchester. Winchester himself comes in, with a following of men in tawny coats; a most undignified colloquy is held between the two magnates; Gloucester, with his men in blue coats, attacks the prelate and his party, till the Mayor of London comes, and charges both to keep the peace.

There is a foundation in the Chronicles for this story; for Gloucester, on a subsequent occasion, made this one of his charges against the Cardinal:—

* Hol., 169, 170; Monst., ii. 542.
† Sc. 4; Hol., 171; Monst., iii. 8.
‡ Act i. Sc. 3.

"Whereas he (Gloucester), being protector and defender of this land, desired the Tower to be opened to him, and to lodge him therein, Richard Woodville, Esquire, having at that time the charge of the keeping of the Tower, refused his desire, and kept the same Tower against him unduly and without reason, by the commandment of my said Lord of Winchester, and afterwards, in approving of the said refusal, he received the said Woodville, and cherished him, against the state and worship of the King, and of my said Lord of Gloucester."

The answer of the Bishop was—

"That it seemeth lawful that the Tower should have been notably stored and kept with victuals; howbeit it was not forthwith executed, and that in likewise after that my said Lord of Gloucester was gone into his country of Hainault, for seditious and odious bills and languages cast and used in the city of London, sounding of insurrection and rebellion against the King's peace, and destruction as well of divers estates of this land, as strangers being under the defence, inasmuch that, in doubt thereof, strangers in great numbers fled the land. And for the more keeping of the said Tower, Richard Woodville, Esquire, so trusted with our sovereign lord the king, that dead is (as well ye know), as also chamberlain and counsellor to my Lord of Bedford, with a certain number of defensible persons assigned unto him, was made deputy there by the assent of the King's council, being at that time in London, for to abide

therein, for the safeguard thereof, and strictly charged by the said council that, during the time of his said charge, *he should not suffer any man to be in the Tower stronger than himself*, without especial charge or commandment of the King by the advice of his council."*

The recent publication of Sir Harris Nicholas† furnishes us with an order of council committing the custody of the Tower to Woodville with a competent force, but I find no trace of the singular clause to which Beaufort refers.

I know not what authority there is for the conflict in the streets of London, but Winchester was certainly charged by Gloucester with arming men against him. The commentators say that a *tawny* coat was the livery of an apparitor, or officer of the bishop's court.

The origin of the quarrel between Gloucester and the Cardinal cannot be discussed without a minuter investigation than belongs to us here. Ambition, probably, and love of power, furnish the best solution; but, whether these passions were equally divided, or, as the author of this play would apparently have us believe, were more eminent and mischievous in the churchman, I am not prepared

* Hol. 147, 148. Holinshed takes the charges from Hall, but I do not find them in the Rolls. They have the appearance of authenticity.

† Privy Council Proceedings, 26th Feb, 1425, iii. 167.

to decide. I have mentioned the limitations of the Protector's power, imposed by the council.* In these the Cardinal had probably a part; and it is probable that he concurred with ecclesiastics in general in condemning the marriage of the Duke with the self-divorced Jacqueline.†

We have now the King in the parliament-house, surrounded by his nobles, among whom are named Exeter, Gloucester, Warwick, Somerset, and Suffolk; the Bishop of Winchester, and also Richard Plantagenet, of whom presently. And then this singular stage direction—

> "Gloucester offers to put up a bill, Winchester *snatches it and tears it.*"

This is the parliament held at Leicester, in the year 1425, the fourth of Henry's reign,‡ when he was about four years old; by the *bill* is intended Gloucester's charge against Beaufort, of which I have spoken. The accused makes a rather remarkable objection to the form of the accusation, which I quote because it is conveyed in lines somewhat more Shakspearean than most of those which we find in this play:—

> *Winch.* Com'st thou with deep premeditated lines,
> With written pamphlets studiously devised,

* P. 221. See Rolls, iv. 326. See Lingard, v. 56.

† See Lingard, v. 66, as to opposition made to the match: the evidence is very scanty.

‡ Parl. Hist. i. 354. Rolls, iv. 295, 18 Feb. 1425.

Humphrey of Gloucester? If thou canst accuse,
Or aught intend'st to lay unto my charge,
Do it without invention, suddenly;
As I with sudden and extemporal speech
Purpose to answer what thou canst object.

"*Glo.* Presumptuous priest! this place commands
my patience,
Or thou should'st find thou hast dishonour'd me.
Think not, although in writing I preferr'd
The manner of thy vile outrageous crimes,
That therefore I have forged, or am not able
Verbatim to rehearse the method of my pen.
No, prelate; such is thy audacious wickedness,
Thy lewd, pestiferous, and dissentious pranks,
As very infants prattle of thy pride."

And the following lines are taken from one of the articles:—

"And for thy treachery, what's more manifest?
In that thou laid'st a trap to take my life,
As well at London Bridge as at the Tower?"

The second article charges Beaufort with intending to take the King from Eltham; and the third alleges that, when the Duke determined to go to Eltham, and to take measures for protecting him—

"My said Lord of Winchester, untruly, and against the King's peace, to the intent to trouble my said Lord of Gloucester going to the King, purposing his death in

case that he had gone that way, set men at arms and archers at the end of London Bridge next Southwark."

The dramatist does not avail himself of the Chronicle for Winchester's defence, which consists in an appeal to his poverty and love of peace.

In the play, Warwick takes part with Gloucester; and Somerset, himself a Beaufort, with the Cardinal. We have then another fray between the retainers of the two parties in the very presence of the King, who endeavours to effect a reconciliation.

The little King certainly could not now interfere, but it is true that the dissentions between his two uncles were the subject of parliamentary consideration. The quarrel had begun, and had apparently produced riots, very early in the reign; the Bishop wrote his complaints to the Duke of Bedford, who came over from France to settle the dispute, which was finally referred to the parliament at Leicester. In the play, Winchester is the more difficult to be reconciled, and in an *aside* avows his insincerity: but the record shows that either the prelate was fairly thought to be in the wrong, or Gloucester was the more powerful in parliament, for the former was obliged to make a submission.

The dispute having been referred to the arbitration of several peers, it was decreed that the Cardinal should make the following apology:—

"My Lord of Gloucester, I have conceived to my great heaviness that you should have received by divers reports that I should have purposed and imagined against your person, honour, and estate, in divers manners, for the which you have taken against me great displeasure. Sir, I take God to witness that what reports soever have been made unto you of me, peradventure by such as have not had great affection unto me—God forgive them—I never imagined nor purposed thing that might be hindering or prejudice to your person, honour, or estate, and for so much I pray you that you will be unto me good lord, from this time forth, for by my will I gave you never other occasion, nor purpose not to do hereafter, through God's grace."

And then Gloucester was to say—

"*Beal** uncle, since you so declare you such a man as you say, I am right glad that it is so, and for such I take you."

And the arbitrators added—

"Also we award, ordain, and decree, that, in token and proof of full and sad love and affection, to be had and kept betwixt my said Lords of Gloucester and of Winchester in manner abovesaid, each of them take other by the hand."

And they did so.

The fourth scene of the second act professes to

* This is the word in the printed roll. It stands, I believe, for *Bel* or *Beau*.

give us the origin of the *Red and White Roses*, as the symbols of the houses of York and Lancaster. The scene is laid in the Temple Gardens, where Richard Plantagenet (son and heir of the Earl of Cambridge, the conspirator against Henry the Fifth) appears to have had an argument with Somerset upon a topic which is not explained, but which appears to have been *a point of law*. York appeals to the company: Suffolk* answers—

" Faith, I have been a truant in the law,
And never yet could frame my will to it;
And, therefore, frame the law unto my will."

And Warwick says—

" But in these *nice sharp quillets of the law*,
Good faith, I am no wiser than a daw."

Not able to get any opinion upon this point of law, Plantagenet invites those of his companions who think him in the right to gather a *white* rose, while those of the contrary opinion pluck a *red* one. Suffolk chooses a red rose, Warwick and Vernon† the white; as does an anonymous "lawyer," who says, addressing Somerset—

* William de la Pole, fourth earl of that name.

† I presume that the person intended is Sir Richard Vernon, Speaker of the House of Commons in the Leicester parliament, ancestor of Lord Vernon. One of the same name, perhaps the same person, is mentioned by Holinshed as a warrior. Collins, vii. 400.

" Unless my study and my books be false,
The argument you held was wrong in you."

In the course of the discussion, which is conducted in the bad language too common in Shakspeare, and very characteristic of this play, Plantagenet is represented as a man of low degree, because his father was attainted. He answers in terms not very explanatory—

" My father was attached, not attainted ;
Condemn'd to die for treason, but no traitor."

Yet, notwithstanding these expressions, and though Somerset was of the Lancastrian stock, I do not imagine, nor has it, so far as I know, ever been said, that this dispute, if it occurred anywhere but in the imagination of the poet, had any reference to the succession to the crown.

If we are to presume that this scene occurred (as it does in the play) immediately before the death of Mortimer, Richard was then about fifteen years old, and his rival, whom he calls *young* Somerset, and a *peevish boy*, must have been much older, having been a distinguished warrior in the time of Henry the Fifth. And at the time of this supposed rencounter with York he was a prisoner in France.* The Somerset of whom I have spoken

* Contin. Croyl., 518, where it is said that he returned in 1434 from a captivity of fifteen years.

hitherto is *John* Beaufort, who is said to have killed himself in 1443.*

"Mortimer" is now introduced† a prisoner in the Tower. It is presumed that the person intended is Edmund, last Earl of March, and Shakspeare was led by Holinshed‡ into the mistake of making him a prisoner. He had, on the contrary, been favoured by Henry the Fifth, and, though he was so far implicated in the treason of Cambridge, Scrope, and Grey, noticed in the last chapter, as to have received a pardon from the king, he was summoned as one of the judges to whom the cases of Cambridge and Scrope (being peers) were referred;§ and there is no notice of his being again under suspicion, or out of favour, in the last reign or in the present. He died, in the year 1424 or 1425, not in the Tower, but in Ireland.

There is another mistake in making him an old man; he died at the age of twenty-four, or thereabouts.

Richard Plantagenet, his nephew, is (in the play)

* Contin. Croyl., 519. Holinshed says that he died about 1432, and that it was his brother Edmund who was the Duke of York's rival; but the *inquisitio post mortem* fixes John's death in 1444. It would seem that York had a quarrel with the two brothers successively.

† Act ii., Sc. 5. ‡ P. 144.

§ Nicolas's Agincourt, p. 40.

sent for by him just before his death, when he tells the dying man that—

"This day, *in argument upon a case,*
Some words there grew 'twixt Somerset and me;
Among which terms he used his lavish tongue,
And did upbraid me with my father's death."

In answer to his inquiries, Mortimer tells him that his father, Cambridge, had been beheaded for the same cause which imprisoned Mortimer himself, having "levied an army" to recover his right to the crown. No part of this is true, except that Cambridge, in the concern which he had in the ill-advised plot against Henry the Fifth, probably had the claims of his brother-in-law in view. These claims are stated correctly—

"For by my mother I derived am
From Lionel Duke of Clarence,* the third son
To King Edward the Third, whereas he [Henry the Fifth]
From John of Gaunt doth bring his pedigree,
Being but fourth of that heroic line."

And he truly adds,

"Thou art my heir."

* The Earl of Cambridge, second son of Edmund Langley, Duke of York, the fifth son of Edward the Third, married Mortimer's sister; and this Richard was their son.

In the Temple Gardens Warwick had promised that

"This blot, which they object unto your house,
Shall be wiped out in the next parliament,
Call'd for the truce of Winchester and Gloucester."

And Richard himself now appears determined to push his claim to the utmost, for he says,

"And therefore haste I to the parliament,
Either to be restored to my blood,
Or make my ill th' advantage of my good."

Accordingly, in the next scene, which represents the Leicester parliament already noticed, Warwick urges the claim of Plantagenet, which Gloucester supports, and nobody but Somerset opposes; whereupon the King creates him Duke of York, and promises to restore his whole inheritance.

This is from Holinshed:—

"When the great fire of this dissension, between these two noble personages (Gloucester and Winchester) was thus by the arbitrators (to their knowledge and judgment) utterly quenched out and laid under board, all other controversies between other lords, taking part with the one party or the other, were appeased and brought to concord, so that for joy thereof the King caused a solemn feast to be kept on Whitsunday, on which day he created Richard Plantagenet, son and heir of the Earl of Cambridge, (whom his father at South-

ampton had put to death, as before ye have heard,) Duke of York, not foreseeing that this preferment should be his destruction, nor that his seed should of his generation be the extreme and final conclusion."

I believe this to be all error. Rapin* has shown that Plantagenet was styled Duke of York previously to the Leicester parliament; and there is no record of any proceeding respecting him in that parliament. He was not *summoned* as such till 1433, when he had come of age.†

But the play has not even the insufficient authority of this Chronicler for any difference, *at this time*, between York and Somerset.

The third act finishes with an incident, the first which we have of the quarrel of the Roses. Vernon —whom we have seen plucking a white rose—and Basset, come to high words in the court at Paris about the merits of York and Somerset, and in another scene appear before the King demanding leave to decide their difference in single combat. The King enjoins them to peace—

"Let me be umpire in this dreadful strife.
I see no reason, if I wear this rose (*putting on a red rose*),
That any one should therefore be suspicious
I more incline to Somerset than York."

* V. 250, from Rymer, x. 266. † Dugdale, 433.

The King uses here a curious method of showing his impartiality; but the whole scene is imaginary, and intended, I presume, to introduce the red rose as the badge of the house of Lancaster.

The King proceeds—

"Cousin of York, we institute your grace
To be our regent in these parts of France;
And, good my Lord of Somerset, unite
Your troops of horsemen with his bands of foot,—
And like true subjects, sons of your progenitors,
Go cheerfully together, and digest
Your angry choler on our enemies.
Ourself, my lord protector, and the rest,
After some respite, will return to Calais."

All this is placed just after Henry's coronation as King of France: that ceremony was performed in 1430, during the life of John Duke of Somerset. York was not appointed regent of France until after the death of the Duke of Bedford in 1435. But the playwright, with his usual contempt of dates, avails himself at this period of a passage in Holinshed which refers to the year 1435.

"Although the Duke of York was worthy, both for birth and courage, of this honour and preferment, yet so disdained of Edmund (*John?*) Duke of Somerset, being cousin to the King, that by all means possible he sought his hindrance, as one glad of his loss, and sorry of his well-doing; by means whereof, *ere the Duke of*

York could get his dispatch, Paris, and divers others of the chiefest places in France, were gotten by the French king. The Duke of York, perceiving his evil will, openly dissembled that which he inwardly minded, either of them wishing things to the other's displeasure, till, through malice and division between them, at length by mortal war they were both consumed, with almost their whole lines and offspring." *

For this beginning of strife between York and Somerset I find no older anthority than Hall's, who tells us, moreover, that Somerset "gaped for" the regency himself. At all events, this great quarrel did not originate in a "quillet of the law."

The historians of the time take no notice of any rivalry between York and Somerset on the occasion of York's *first* appointment to the regency. The quarrel is stated to have begun, when, after five years' good service, he was reappointed.†

* Hol., 185.

† Wethamstede, ii., 345, 6; William of Wyrcester seems to put the quarrel in 1450, ii., 473. York was reappointed to the regency on 3d July, 1440; Rymer, 786. There is much doubt and confusion as to this regency. Holinshed says that York was superseded by Warwick in 1437; and though he expresses his doubts, that earl certainly was so appointed. (Rymer, x. 675.) Holinshed also says that, when York's reappointment was proposed, Somerset *successfully* opposed it; but it is clear that York was appointed, as above; and the nomination of Somerset was much later; and *this* was *Edmund*, brother to John, whose death Ho-

Turn we now to the fifth act, where King Henry asks Gloucester and Exeter—

" Have you perused the letters from the Pope,
The Emperor, and the Earl of Armagnac?
Glouc. I have, my lord, and their intent is this,—
They humbly sue unto your excellence,
To have a godly peace concluded of,
Between the realms of England and of France."

And

" The Earl of Armagnac—near knit to Charles,
A man of great authority in France—
Proffers his only daughter to your grace
In marriage, with a large and sumptuous dowry."

Then come a legate from the Pope, and two ambassadors, " with Winchester in a cardinal's habit." The King signifies his assent to the proposal, which, from the answer, Winchester is to carry over to France.

On seeing Beaufort in his new habiliments, Exeter exclaims—

" What! is my lord of Winchester install'd,
And call'd unto a cardinal's degree?

linshed, erroneously, places about 1432, whereas he died (p. 246) in 1444.—See Hol., 185, 191, 194. Hardyng says that after Bedford's death, Burgundy was regent for a year, then Warwick one year, then Stafford (afterwards Buckingham) for two years, then Huntingdon (Holland, afterwards Duke of Exeter), and afterwards York seven years, then Somerset; but this is clearly wrong as to York.

Then, I perceive, that will be verified,
Henry the Fifth did sometime prophesy—
If once he come to be a cardinal,
He'll make his cap co-equal with the crown."

Commentators have observed that Beaufort had appeared as cardinal in the very first act, and "it is strange the Duke of Exeter should not know of his advancement.' The thing is wrong every way. Winchester was not a cardinal at the period intended in the first act, which is just after Henry the Fifth's death, and he became a cardinal long before the time of this intended marriage. But the critics have not observed that at this time there was no Duke of Exeter in existence, or, if there was, it was one of a different family. Beaufort Duke of Exeter, brother to the cardinal, died in 1426;* and it was in 1443, subsequently, I apprehend, to the present transaction, that John Holland was raised to that dignity which his father had formerly possessed.†

Shakspeare follows Holinshed‡ in representing this match as offered by Armagnac, who had recently quarrelled with his kinsman, the King of

* Nicolas's Synopsis, i., 224.

† The first John Holland was the third son of Thomas Earl of Kent, by Joan, daughter of Edmund, son of Edward the First. This John was attainted in 1400, after the deposition of Richard the Second.

‡ Hol., 205.

France. That it was the particular project of the English council, or the peculiar favourite of Gloucester, nowhere appears. In fact, contemporaries are silent; we know nothing but that a mission was sent in 1442* *to choose one of the daughters* and to treat of the marriage. Fabyan says† that

"it was afterwards disallowed and put apart by the means of the Earl of Suffolk, which kindled a new brand of burning envy between the *lord protector* and him, and took fire in such wise that it left not till both parties with many others were consumed and slain, whereof ensued much mischief within the realm, and loss of all Normandy."

Rapin says that the English government "grew cold with respect to the match," when Armagnac had been stripped of his territories by the French king.

Cardinal Beaufort was not (as in the play) employed upon this mission, nor upon any connected with the marriage of Henry; though he had been an extensive diplomatist, and was especially employed at the negociation of Arras in 1434,‡ and at Calais in the following year.

The dramatist's mode of bringing about the match with Margaret of Anjou is quite imaginary.

* Rymer, xi., 8.

† P. 616.

‡ Monstr., iii., 118, 285.

Suffolk is made to take the young princess prisoner, about the time of the capture of Joan of Arc, to fall in love with her, to propose, on the spot, her union with Henry, and then to come home and suggest it to the King. Holinshed's account is different.

"In treating of this truce, the Earl of Suffolk, adventuring somewhat upon his commission, without the consent of his associates, imagined that the next way to come to a perfect peace was to contrive a marriage between the French king's kinswoman, the lady Margaret, daughter to Regnier, Duke of Anjou, and his sovereign lord King Henry. This Regnier named himself King of Sicile, Naples, and Jerusalem, having only the name and style of those realms, without any penny, profit, or foot of possession. This marriage was made strange to the Earl at the first, and one thing seemed to be a great hindrance to it, which was, because the King of England occupied a great part of the duchy of Anjou, and the whole county of Maine, appertaining (as was alleged) to King Regnier. The Earl of Suffolk (I cannot say either corrupted with bribes, or too much affectioned to this unprofitable marriage) condescended that the duchy of Anjou and the county of Maine should be delivered to the King, the bride's father, demanding for the marriage neither penny nor farthing; as who would say that this new affinity passed all riches, and excelled both gold and precious

stones.* . . . . . This lady excelled all other, as well in beauty and favour as in wit and policy, and was in stomach and courage more like a man than a woman."

There is thus not even the slender authority of Holinshed for believing that Margaret was taken prisoner, or that Suffolk had seen her when he proposed the marriage. Nor indeed is it clear that he did propose the match. He was employed in the negociation which ended in the truce between England and France, and then, it is supposed, the project occurred to him: but his original instructions,† which are on record, contemplated the King's marriage, though they are silent as to the person; and in these instructions Gloucester concurred.‡

I know not then upon what authority it is presumed that the proposal of this ill-fated marriage came from Suffolk, or that it was suggested by him and the Cardinal in opposition to Gloucester; nor have we older authority than Fabyan's § for Gloucester's pleading the faith pledged to Armagnac. Suffolk, no doubt, was employed to espouse Margaret, as the King's proxy, and to bring her to England; and it is probable that he then got into

* Hol., 206.
† Rymer, xi., 53.
‡ Nicolas, Pr. Counc., vi. p. x. xiii.
§ P. 617.

her good graces. But Lingard* has shown from the Rolls, that Gloucester concurred publicly in the thanks bestowed upon Suffolk for his conduct in the affair. After reciting the services of Suffolk in the truce and marriage, the record proceeds :—

"The Speaker, in the name of himself and all the said commons, prayed to all my lords, spiritual and temporal, there then being present, that they would vouchsafe, for the said considerations, pray and beseech our said sovereign lord the King to repute, accept, declare, and take my said lord of Suffolk to his good and benign grace and favour, for the causes above said, in manner and form above rehearsed at their singular prayer and desire, and desired the said declarations, labours, and demeaning of my said lord of Suffolk to be enacted in this present parliament, to his true acquittal and discharge and honour of him in time to come; upon the which request thus made to the King our sovereign lord, and to the lords spiritual and temporal, by the commons, *my lord of Gloucester*, and many other lords spiritual and temporal abovesaid, *arose of their seats, and besought humbly the King of the same as they were prayed by the said commons*," &c.

But this historian also refers to the terms of Suffolk's instructions, by which it appears that he was diffident of approbation, and this perhaps counte-

* V., 121, referring to Rolls, v. 73, 4 June, 1444.

nances the belief that he was aware of opposition from a powerful quarter.

The instruction to Suffolk to "gather up a tenth," for his expenses, is an anticipation of a grant which I shall hereafter notice.

If some violence is done to history in this matter of Suffolk and Margaret, a more unjustifiable liberty is taken with truth in regard to the pacification which preceded the marriage. It is not only that Winchester is substituted for Suffolk, who was the real negociator of this treaty, and that York is made, without any warranty, to oppose it altogether, but the French King is made to submit to ignominious terms.

> "You shall become true liegeman to his crown,*
> And, Charles, upon condition thou wilt swear
> To pay him tribute, and submit thyself,
> Thou shalt be placed as viceroy under him,
> And still enjoy thy regal dignity."

There is not a word, even in Holinshed, to support this: the terms of the truce are extant, and contain no condition of allegiance or submission on either side.†

Johnson makes no critical remark upon this play. He could have said little that was good.

* Henry's.

† Monstr., iii. 378; Rymer, xi. 63.

As the principal English characters will appear again, I shall make no remark upon them as they exhibit themselves in this play. Of our Talbot, as well as of Dunois, Alençon, and other Frenchmen, we know nothing but that they were brave soldiers. Charles the Seventh had, according to French historians, but not, as I believe, according to any that were open to Shakspeare, a character susceptible of dramatic art; it had some resemblance to that which is popularly ascribed to Henry the Fifth; but with this essential difference, that the good did not follow and supersede the bad, but kept up an alternation with it through life.*

* See Sismondi, xiii. 163, 522.

HENRY VI.—PART II.

THE "Second Part of Henry VI." opens with the introduction of Queen Margaret to the King and his court * by Suffolk, who had been sent to marry her as the King's proxy, and bring her to England.

This commencement fits exactly, as Johnson observes, the conclusion of the former; but I have already shown that the narrative of the first play went deeply into the period to which this refers.

Holinshed is followed in making the cession of Anjou and Maine a part of the arrangement concluded by Suffolk.† But the State Paper by which

* Consisting of Gloucester, Cardinal Beaufort, Warwick, York, and Somerset, all known to us in the former play, and two new characters. Richard Neville, third son of Ralph Earl of Westmoreland, and husband of Alice, daughter of the Salisbury who was killed before Orleans, and thence became himself Earl of *Salisbury*. He was father to Warwick. *Buckingham* was Humphrey Stafford, Earl of Stafford, Earl of Buckingham in right of his mother (who was sister of Humphrey Plantagenet, the last earl), and created duke in 1441.—Nicolas, i. 92.

† Hol., 206. See p. 255.

the cessions are stipulated, and which Gloucester is on that account unable to read to the end, is apparently the composition of the dramatist; at least I can nowhere find it, or any written agreement whatever upon the subject. Holinshed's language, indeed, is consistent with the third article of the impeachment of Suffolk (of which hereafter), stating that he was believed to have consented to this cession, apparently by a private understanding, without the assent, perhaps without the privity, of his colleagues in the embassy.* There is nothing about the marriage, or these provinces, in the treaty by which the *truce* was stipulated.†

Suffolk's elevation to the rank of duke did not take place until three years afterwards; he got his *marquisate* between the date of his mission and that of the marriage.‡

For the measure next announced I find neither authority nor reason:—

> "Cousin of York, we here discharge your grace
> From being regent in the parts of France,
> Till term of eighteen months be full expired."

I have already said that I seek in vain for the

* Parl. Hist., i. 387. Rolls, v. 178, anno 1450.

† Rymer, xi. 59.

‡ Sept. 14, 1444. The marriage, May 30, 1445. Holinshed himself makes the *Marquisate* the reward of the mission, p. 207.

alleged opposition of Gloucester, and that authentic records appear to negative the allegation. Shakspeare's account is from Holinshed:—

"Although this marriage pleased the king and divers of his council, yet Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, protector of the realm, was much against it, alleging that it was both contrary to the laws of God and dishonourable to the prince, if he should break that promise and contract of marriage made by ambassadors sufficiently thereto instructed, with the daughter of the Earl of Armagnac, upon conditions both to him and his realm as much profitable as honourable; but the duke's word would not be heard, for the earl's doings were only liked and allowed." *

This Chronicler mentions the petition of the Commons in favour of Suffolk,† and the support given to it by the peers, though he does not mention Gloucester either as concurring or dissenting on that occasion.

Holinshed, as usual, copied from Hall,‡ who, whether inventor or transmitter, is, I believe, the oldest Chronicler of the Protector's displeasure. I now give the account of Fabyan,§ who, although not, as Mackintosh calls him,‖ a contemporary,

* Hol., 207.
† See p. 257.
‡ P. 204.
§ P. 618.
‖ Hist. Eng., ii. 7. I cannot call a writer *contemporary* because he might have been *born* when the events took

flourished within less than half a century of these times :—

"In this 21st year the foresaid Earl of Suffolk, which, as before is touched, had foredone the conclusion of the marriage late by the ambassadors between the King and the Earl of Armagnac's daughter, went over himself with other unto him assigned, and there in France concluded a marriage between the King and Dame Margaret, the King's daughter of Sicily and Jerusalem, as saith the English Chronicle.* And for this marriage to bring about to the said King of Sicily was delivered the duchy of Anjou and earldom of Maine, which are called the keys of Normandy. But the French writer saith in his later Chronicle, that about this time the Earl of Suffolk came unto Charles, the French king, to a town in Lorraine, named Nance or Nant, and asked of him his daughter to be Queen of England, but he giveth her no name; the which request of the said earl to the said Charles was granted: also he affirmeth little before that season a peace between both realms was concluded for the term of twenty months, which peace endured but for a while after. . . . . Of this marriage are of divers writers left divers remembrances,

place. But it is very doubtful whether Fabyan, who was Sheriff of London in 1493, was born in 1445. The date of Hall's birth is uncertain, but it was, at the very least, half a century after Margaret's marriage.

* I apprehend that the Chronicle here intended is Caxton's, in Leland, ii. 493.

saying that this marriage was unprofitable to the realm divers ways. For first was given up for her, out of the King's possession, the duchy of Anjou and earldom of Maine, and for the cost of her conveying into this land was acted in plain parliament a fifteen and a half by the Marquis of Suffolk, by reason whereof he grew in such hatred of the people that it finally cost him his life."*

And this writer traces all the subsequent losses of England to—

"the breaking of the promise made by the King to the Earl of Armagnac's daughter."

Genuine or not, Gloucester's speech in the play, though not equal to some which I have cited, is Shakspearian enough to justify those who believe that he did write or alter this play, though not the preceding :—

"Brave peers of England, pillars of the state,
To you Duke Humphrey must unload his grief,
Your grief, the common grief of all the land.
What! did my brother Henry spend his youth,
His valour, coin, and people, in the wars?
Did he so often lodge in open field,
In winter's cold, and summer's parching heat,
To conquer France, his true inheritance?
And did my brother Bedford toil his wits,

* P. 617-18.

To keep by policy what Henry got?
Have you yourselves, Somerset, Buckingham,
Brave York, Salisbury, and victorious Warwick,
Received deep scars in France and Normandy?
Or hath mine uncle Beaufort, and myself,
With all the learned council of the realm,
Studied so long, sat in the council-house
Early and late, debating to and fro
How France and Frenchmen might be kept in awe?
And hath his highness in his infancy
Been crown'd in Paris, in despite of foes?
And shall these labours, and these honours, die?
Shall Henry's conquest, Bedford's viligance,
Your deeds of war, and all our counsel, die?
O peers of England, shameful is this league!
Fatal this marriage, cancelling your fame;
Blotting your names from books of memory;
Razing the characters of your renown;
Defacing monuments of conquer'd France;
Undoing all, as all had never been!"

And when he mentions the more particular cause of discontent—

"Suffolk, the new-made duke that rules the roast,
Hath given the duchies of Anjou and Maine
Unto the poor king Regnier, whose large style
Agrees not with the leanness of his purse."

Salisbury adds, from the Chronicle—

"These counties were the keys of Normandy."

And Gloucester has the same authority for—

" A proper jest, and never heard before,
That Suffolk should demand a whole fifteenth,
For costs and charges of transporting her."*

This subsidy was granted by the Parliament, in which Suffolk's services were acknowledged by Gloucester, who was, therefore, probably a party to the grant at which he is made to sneer; but the Records† mention no special grant for Suffolk's expenses.

We have no authentic accounts of the cabal which, following Holinshed,‡ the poet raises against Gloucester, in which Queen Margaret, Suffolk, the Cardinal, and Buckingham (Shakspeare adds Somerset) were concerned.

" Whilst the wars between the two nations of England and France ceased by occasion of the truce, the minds of men were not so quiet; but that such as were bent to malicious revenge sought to compass their prepensed purpose, not against foreign foes and enemies of their country, but against their own countrymen, and those that had deserved very well of the commonwealth; and this specially for overmuch mildness in the king, who, by his authority, might well have ruled both parts, and ordered all differences betwixt them, but that

* See p. 264.
† Parliament at Westminster, 25 Feb. 1445. Rolls, v. 69.
‡ P. 210.

indeed he was thought too soft for governor of a kingdom. The queen, contrariwise, a lady of great wit and no less courage, desirous of honour, and furnished with the gifts of reason, policy, and wisdom; but yet sometime, (according to her kind), when she had been fully bent upon a matter, suddenly like a weathercock mutable and turning.

"This lady, disdaining that her husband should be ruled rather than rule, could not abide that the Duke of Gloucester should do all things concerning the order of weighty affairs, lest it might be said that she had neither wit nor stomach, which would permit and suffer her husband, being of the most perfect age, like a young pupil to be governed by the direction of another man. Although this toy first entered into her head through her own imagination, yet was she pricked forward to the matter, both by such of her husband's council as had long time borne malice to the Duke for his plainness used in declaring their untruth (as partly ye have heard), as also by counsel from king Regnier her father, advising that she and the King should take upon them the rule of the realm, and not to be kept under, as wards and mastered orphans.

"What needeth many words? The Queen, persuaded by these means, first of all excluded the Duke of Gloucester from all rule and governance, not prohibiting such as she knew to be his mortal foes to invent and imagine causes and griefs against him, insomuch that by her procurement divers noblemen con-

spired against him. Of the which divers writers affirm the Marquis of Suffolk and the Duke of Buckingham to be the chief, not unprocured by the Cardinal of Winchester and the Archbishop of York."*

Human nature, if not history, justifies the jealousy which his lay associates felt of the Cardinal, while they co-operated with him against Duke Humphrey; of whom the prelate's envious feeling is thus expressed:—

" What though the common people favour him,
Calling him Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester,
Clapping their hands, and crying with loud voice,
Jesu maintain your royal excellence!
Will God preserve the good Duke Humphrey?"

Whethamstede† has borne testimony to the popularity of Gloucester, and Fabyan tells us that " for his honourable and liberal demeanour he was surnamed the *good Duke of Gloucester*."‡ Salisbury and Warwick are made, arbitrarily, to take the part of Gloucester, and so apparently does York. This allocation of parts is quite fair in dramatising history; nor, indeed, is the fact *contrary* to history, though not specifically warranted.

" *Salis.* I never saw but Humphrey Duke of Gloucester
Did bear him like a noble gentleman;

* John Kemp, afterwards Cardinal, Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Canterbury.

† P. 466. ‡ P. 619.

Oft have I seen the haughty cardinal—
More like a soldier than a man of the church,
As stout and proud as he were lord of all—
Swear like a ruffian, and demean himself,
Unlike the ruler of a common-weal.
Warwick, my son, the comfort of my age!
Thy deeds, thy plainness, and thy house-keeping,
Hath won the greatest favour of the commons,
Excepting none but good Duke Humphrey.
And, brother York, thy acts in Ireland,
In bringing them to civil discipline,
Thy late exploits done in the heart of France,
When thou wert regent for our sovereign,
Have made thee fear'd and honour'd of the people."

There is sad confusion here as to Warwick. The Warwick of the play is clearly intended to be the younger Neville, son of Salisbury; but *he* did not attain the title until 1449: Beauchamp, his brother-in-law and predecessor, died in the year of the present scene, 1445, but *he* it was who had distinguished himself in France, though it was Neville himself who acquired popularity.

"Full fraught was this nobleman with good qualities right excellent and many, all which a certain natural grace did unto all estates so far forth recommend, that with high and low he was in singular favour and good liking, so as (unsought-for) it seemed in authority among them he grew able to command all alone."

Nor is it without his usual authority that Shakspeare ascribes some part of this lord's popularity to his good table:—

"The Earl of Warwick, as one to whom the commonwealth was much bounden, and ever had in great favour with the commons of this land, by reason of *the exceeding household which he daily kept* in all countries wherein he sojourned or lay; and when he came to London *he kept such a house that six oxen were eaten at a breakfast*, and every tavern was full of his meat, for who that had any acquaintance in that house he had as much sod and roast as he might carry upon a long dagger."*

I know not why York in this scene of the play professes his intention of seeming to favour Humphrey; a part of the plot which is soon forgotten.

In prosecution of their schemes against Gloucester, Suffolk and the Cardinal are made the instigators of Hume (or *Hum* as he is called in the older play) in drawing Eleanor Cobham, the Duchess of Gloucester, into practices of witchcraft and treason.

Holinshed certainly insinuates that the accusation of the Duchess was effected by the enemies of her husband, who had recently preferred fresh charges against Beaufort.†

* Hol., 301.

† These are given at length by Hall (197) and Holinshed (198), under the year 1441. Lingard (v. 116) supposes them

"Divers secret attempts were advanced forward this season against the noble man Humphrey Duke of Gloucester a far off, which in conclusion came so near that they bereft him both of life and land, as shall hereafter more plainly appear. For first this year (1441) Dame Eleanor Cobham, wife to the said Duke, was accused of treason, for that she by sorcery and enchantment intended to destroy the King, to the intent to advance her husband unto the crown. Upon this she was examined in St. Stephen's Chapel before the Bishop of Canterbury, and there by examination convict, and adjudged to do penance in three open places within the city of London. Polychronicon saith, she was enjoined to go through Cheapside with a taper in her hand, and after that adjudged to perpetual imprisonment in the Isle of Man under the keeping of Sir John Stanley, knight.* The matter laid against them [for Bolingbroke and the others are named, as in the play] was, for that they, at the request of the said Duchess, had devised an image of wax representing the King, which, by their sorcery,

to have been presented to the King in 1439. The Chroniclers say that they were referred to the council, which *consisted chiefly of ecclesiastics*, and therefore nothing came of them; but I can find in Nicolas no list in which ecclesiastics are the more numerous. For the articles of charge, there is no earlier authority than Hall: he must either have forged them (which is extremely improbable) or have taken them from an older writer or record. Can no antiquary find them? There are other cases of this kind.

* See Priv. Coun., vi. 58.

by little and little consumed, intending thereby in conclusion to waste and decay the King's person." *

For the prophecies which the conjurors extract from their spirits I find no authority. An insinuation that the charge against Eleanor was part of the scheme of "persons near about the King," is found in Fabyan.† It certainly came opportunely to bring the Duke into disrepute; but "he bore all things patiently, and said little."

He made no attempt to save her:—

> "I cannot justify whom the law condemns;"

and it is possible that he was not very sorry to get rid of a wife who, though probably no witch, was not the most amiable or purest of women.

Whatever part Beaufort may have had in this affair, Queen Margaret certainly had none. Though Suffolk in the play announces it to the Queen as a contrivance to get the Duchess out of her way, it really occurred three years before she came to England.‡

The scene of the dropped fan and the box of the ear, and the descriptive *tirade* against Eleanor, are imaginary. From respect to the fair critic, I

* Hol., 203.

† P. 614. Lingard says (v. 118) that Fabyan's ground is, that Margery Jourdain lived near Winchester; but that is *not* the ground of Fabyan, who clearly writes from tradition.

‡ Hol., 204, and Grafton, 622.

quote the lines, which Mrs. Jameson praises as "a burst of female spite which is admirable:"—

"Not all these lords do vex me half so much,
As that proud dame, the lord protector's wife.
She sweeps it through the court with troops of ladies,
More like an empress than Duke Humphrey's wife;
Strangers in court do take her for the queen:
She bears a duke's revenues on her back,
And in her heart she scorns our poverty:
Shall I not live to be avenged on her?
Contemptuous base-born* callat as she is,
She vaunted 'mongst her minions, t'other day,
The very train of her worst wearing-gown
Was better worth than all my father's lands,
Till Suffolk gave two dukedoms for his daughter."†

It is not easy to understand why York and Buckingham are brought together as the detectors of the bad practices of Eleanor, and providing

"A sorry breakfast for my lord protector,"

seeing that York professed to espouse, at least seemingly, the cause of the Duke.

The story of Peter and his master‡ is in Holinshed:—

* Eleanor's baseness was not in her birth; she was the daughter of Reginald Lord Cobham of Sterborough. Sandford, 316.

† Act i. Sc. 3. Jameson's Charact., ii. 251.

‡ Act i. Sc. 3; and Act ii. Sc. 3.

"In the same year also (1446), a certain armourer was appeached of treason by a servant of his own, for proof whereof a day was given them to fight in Smithfield, insomuch that in conflict the said armourer was overcome and slain, but yet by the misgoverning of himself; for on the morrow, when he should come to the field fresh and fasting, his neighbours came to him and gave him wine and strong drink * in such excessive sort, that he was therewith distempered, and reeled as he went, and so was slain *without guilt*. As for the false servant, he lived not long unpunished, for being convict of felony in court of assize, he was judged to be hanged, and so was at Tyburn." †

This fight is mentioned by Fabyan,‡ with its circumstances, and the fact is matter of record;§ but I know not why Shakspeare, or the author of the old play, specifies the imputed treason as consisting in an assertion of York's claim to the crown.

Malone says‖ that the other story, the detection of the pretended blindness or lameness, is taken from Sir Thomas More; the dramatist is more likely to have found it in Grafton.¶

The same scene contains a debate in council, upon the question whether York or Somerset should

* Hall says, malmsey and *aqua vitæ*.
† Hol., 210. ‡ P. 618.
§ Priv. Coun., vi., p. xxix., 55.
‖ Bosw., 207. ¶ i. 630.

be Regent of France. I have already shown that there is a doubt as to the date of this contest. * In the play, Gloucester takes the part of York, until he hears of the armourer's asserting his right to the crown, when he says:—

> "Let Somerset be regent o'er the French,
> Because in York this breeds suspicion."

I believe that this is so far correct, that Somerset's appointment to the regency occurred about the time of the trial by combat.

The second act exhibits the court hawking at St. Alban's, renews the quarrel between Gloucester and the Cardinal, and exhibits the Queen taking a decided part against the Lord Protector: the Cardinal, churchman as he is, agrees to fight a duel with Gloucester; indeed, makes the first overture towards this method of settling the dispute, for which there is no known authority. The Queen's part is taken from Holinshed.

The Chronicle already cited bears out the play pretty well, except as to dates.

> "*K. Henry*. Stay, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester,
> ere thou go
> Give up thy staff; Henry will to himself
> Protector be, and God shall be my hope,
> My stay, my guide, and lantern to my feel;

* P. 250.

And go in peace, Humphrey, *no less beloved*
Than when thou wert protector to a king."

Though I may decidedly pronounce Shakspeare wrong in taking the Protector's staff from Duke Humphrey at the moment of his wife's condemnation, I cannot assign an exact date to the cessation of the protectorate.

At the time of Gloucester's death, Henry was in the twenty-sixth year of his age; the Duke must therefore have certainly ceased to be Protector for some years preceding that event.* I have quoted the passage in which Henry declares his continued favour to the retiring Protector. But it appears that for several years after the death of the Duke, attempts were repeatedly made by his friends in parliament to procure an acknowledgment of his innocence; but these were always unsuccessful so long as the government was in the hands of Henry himself.† They succeeded when York obtained the power. I cannot agree with Lingard, that "no arguments could subdue the conviction or prejudice of *the King*." Were not his advisers those who had criminated Gloucester?

When the scene changes to the parliament, which, following the Chronicle, is held at St. Edmund's Bury, the Queen breaks out against Gloucester:—

* See Lingard, v. 107; and the Rolls cited, v. 433-8.
† Lingard, v. 124; from Wheth., 367.

"Can you not see? or will you not observe
The strangeness of his alter'd countenance?
With what a majesty he bears himself;
How insolent he is of late become;
How proud, peremptory, and unlike himself?
We know the time, since he was mild and affable;
And, if we did but glance a far-off look,
Immediately he was upon his knee,
That all the court admired him for submission:
But meet him now, and, be it in the morn,
When every one will give the time of day,
He knits his brow, and shows an angry eye,
And passeth by with stiff unbowed knee,
Disdaining duty that to us belongs."

Suffolk accuses him of participation with his Duchess, and each of his enemies flings an accusation.

"*Cardinal.* Did he not, contrary to form of law,
Devise strange deaths for small offences done?

York. And did he not, in his protectorship,
Levy great sums of money through the realm,
For soldiers' pay in France, and never sent it?
By means whereof the towns each day revolted."

And when Gloucester appears, and is immediately "arrested of high treason, " York goes further:—

"'Tis thought, my lord, that you *took bribes from France,*

And, being Protector, stay'd the soldiers' pay;
By means whereof his highness hath lost France."

These charges are from Holinshed; Gloucester protests his innocence in forcible, and, I think, Shakspearian language.

"Divers articles were laid against him in open council, and in especially one; *that he had caused men adjudged to die, to be put to other execution than the law of the land assigned.* Surely the Duke, very well learne in the law civil, detesting malefactors, and punishing offenders in severity of justice, got him hatred of such as feared condign reward for their wicked doings. And although the Duke sufficiently answered to all things against him objected, yet, because his death was determined, his wisdom and innocency nothing availed."*

"Is it but thought so? what are they that think it?
I never robb'd the soldiers of their pay,
Nor ever had one penny bribe from France.
So help me God, as I have watch'd the night—
Ay, night by night—in studying good for England!
That doit that e'er I wrested from the King,
Or any groat I hoarded for my use,
Be brought against me at my trial day!
No! many a pound of mine own proper store,
Because I would not tax the needy Commons,

* Hol., 211, from Hall, 209. I cannot discover in records, contemporaries, or even in Fabyan, the charge as specified by Hall.

Have I disbursed to the garrisons,
And never ask'd for restitution."

York reiterates the charge of excessive punishments :—

" *Glouc.* Why, 'tis well known, that whiles I was Protector,
Pity was all the fault that was in me ;
For I should melt at an offender's tears,
And lowly words were ransom for their fault.
Unless it were a bloody murderer,
Or foul felonious thief that fleeced poor passengers,
I never gave them condign punishment :
Murder, indeed, that bloody sin, I tortured
Above the felon, or what trespass else."

And he thus characterises his accusers, in terms which must, as I think, have been borrowed from some contemporary Chronicle not now in existence :—

" Beaufort's red sparkling eyes blab his heart's malice,
And Suffolk's cloudy brow his stormy hate ;
Sharp Buckingham unburdens with his tongue
The envious load that lies upon his heart ;
And dogged York, that reaches at the moon,
Whose overweening arm I have pluck'd back,
By false accuse doth level at my life :—
And you, my sovereign lady, with the rest,
Causeless have laid disgraces on my head ;
And, with your best endeavours, have stirr'd up
My lifest liege to be mine enemy."

In the play the Queen herself, so soon as Henry has departed, proposes to the peers present, that is, the Cardinal, Suffolk, Buckingham, Somerset, and York, that Duke Humphrey should be "quickly rid the world;" Beaufort, Suffolk, and York,* then conspire to bring about the Duke's death.

And York enters into this felonious conspiracy in the presence of Somerset, with whom, indeed, he has, even in this very scene, an altercation; for when a messenger announces a disturbance in Ireland, York proposes, ironically, that Somerset, the fortunate Regent of France (where, in truth, he had lost every thing), should be sent thither; and a most undignified dialogue ensues, which ends in York's undertaking the service. This I believe to be correct, though it is uncertain whether York's nomination to Ireland was subsequent to Somerset's return from France.†

The murder is now accomplished under the immediate direction of Suffolk. ‡

* Buckingham had never been taken off the stage, but he takes no part; though in the Chronicle *he* is named as one of the Duke's enemies, while neither York is, nor Somerset.

† For York's appointment I have no old authority but that of Hardyng, p. (399); see Stow, 387. Rapin and Lingard were apparently as much puzzled as I am about these appointments, for they give no authorities or particulars: see Rapin, v. 379, and Lingard, v. 125.

‡ Act iii. Sc. 2.

Holinshed says, that "all indifferent persons might well understand that he died of some violent death." The paragraphs conveying Holinshed's suspicion of murder are taken from Hall;* Fabyan says only, "of whose murder divers reports were made, which I pass over."† Hardyng says of Gloucester, that after his wife's disgrace—

"Into Wales he went of frowardness,
And to the King had great heaviness.
Wherefore the lords then of the king's counsel
Made the King to set his high parliament
At Bury there, whither he came without fail.
Where *in parlesey* he died incontinent
For heaviness and loss of regiment;
And oft afore he was in that sickness,
In point of death, and stood in sore distress."‡

And Whethamstede, another contemporary, says:—

"In the parliament held at Bury St. Edmund's, the King caused him to be arrested by the Constable of England, and put into such close confinement, that through sorrowfulness he took to the bed of sickness, and died in a few days."§

* P. 208.

† P. 618. But he mentions the death of Gloucester among the popular charges against Suffolk, p. 622. Polydore Vergil affirms boldly that the Duke was strangled, pp. 491-493.

‡ P. 400.

§ Wheth., ii. 365.

The Continuator of the Croyland Register says, that—

"The boldness of Suffolk went to that degree of presumption, that, by fraud and intrigue, he removed from the King's presence all the King's relations and friends, and those near to him in blood, as well bishops as clergymen of other degrees, and laymen. And he even most falsely accused of treason, the illustrious prince, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the King's uncle, approved in all things most faithful to the King from his infancy, during twenty-four years. For which affair a parliament was called at Bury, in Suffolk, at the instigation of the Earl, in the winter of 1447; whither the Duke coming, and suspecting nothing unfair, was immediately sequestered from his own people, and committed to the custody of certain persons of the King's family; who, not being admitted to answer, or condemned after a judicial examination, *was in the morning produced and exhibited a dead man, though he had been safe and sound in the evening.*"*

The writer of this last cited passage had probably in his mind some suspicion of foul play; but as this is all that I can collect from contemporary writers, and no one of them mentions even a *rumour* of the murder, though Whethamstede was an admirer of Duke Humphrey, and wrote when

* P. 521.

his enemies were dead and their party humbled,* "I cannot think that Fabyan's authority is sufficient to establish a strong suspicion that murder was committed, still less to fix it upon Suffolk or the Queen."

In the play, Salisbury and Warwick pretty roundly accuse Suffolk and the Cardinal. Warwick and Suffolk engage in a personal conflict, on which occasion Henry utters the well-known lines:

"What stronger breast-plate than a heart untainted?
Thrice is he arm'd that hath his quarrel just;
And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted."†

The Commons become clamorous for the punishment of Suffolk as the murderer.

I have already shown that there was *no* Earl of Warwick in 1447. And I find neither in Holinshed, nor in more authentic records, any popular commotion or interference on the part of the Commons at this time; I say, *the* Commons, because I think it clear that though in one place "the men of Bury" are spoken of, those who threaten to break into the King's presence are intended to be "the Commons in parliament assembled." Yet one of our

* See Lingard, v. 122. It is to be observed that the two accounts do not agree as to the state of health in which Gloucester was before his death.

† This passage has no original in the "Contention."

historians introduces his account of this Bury parliament by a description of Suffolk, which implies that he had a majority in parliament, as "a man of singular astuteness, skilful in deceit, *who easily persuaded the people to consent to his will.*" *

And the Chronicler who expatiates upon the popularity of Gloucester, makes no mention of any jealousy of Suffolk;† the language, therefore, in which that minister speaks of the representatives of the people, is a gratuitous interpolation by the dramatist.

> " 'Tis like, the Commons, rude unpolish'd hinds,
> Could send such message to their sovereign:
> But you, my lord, were glad to be employ'd,
> To show how quaint an orator you are:
> But all the honour Salisbury hath won,
> Is—that he was the lord ambassador,
> Sent by a sort of tinkers to the King."

Three years afterwards, it is true, Suffolk was impeached; but no one of the charges against him, which, being in Holinshed, were before Shakspeare, mentions the death of Gloucester. The most grievous accusation was that of traitorously adhering to the King's enemies: he was also charged with counselling the release of the Duke of Orleans, and with effecting the cession of Anjou and Maine.

* Cont. Croyl., 521. † Wheth., p. 366.

The result of this accusation is thus given by Holinshed:—

"The Queen, *which entirely loved the Duke*, doubting some trouble and commotion to arise if he were let go unpunished, caused him, for a colour, to be committed to the Tower; where he remained not past a month, but was again delivered and restored to the King's favour, as much as ever he was before. This doing so much displeased the people, that, if politic provision had not been, great mischief had immediately issued. . . . After this outrage thus assuaged, the parliament was adjourned to Leicester, whither came the King and Queen in great state, and with them the Duke of Suffolk as chief councillor. The Commons of the lower house, not forgetting their old grudge, besought the King that such persons as assented to the relief of Anjou and release of Maine might be duly punished. And to be privy to that fact they accused, as principal, the Duke of Suffolk, with John Bishop of Salisbury,* and Sir James Fiennes, Lord Say,† and divers others. When the King perceived that there was no remedy to appease the people's fury by any colourable ways, he first sequestered the Lord Say, being Treasurer of England, and other the Duke's adherents, from their offices and rooms,

* I presume *William* Ayscough, Clerk of the Council, who was murdered in June of this year, 1450.

† James Fiennes, Lord Say; the present Lord Say and Sele is his representative, through females; see Nicolas, ii. 575.

and after banished the Duke of Suffolk, as the abhorred load and common annoyance of the whole realm, for a term of five years, meaning by this exile to appease the malice of the people for the time, and after (when the matter should be forgotten) to revoke him home again."*

The banishment of Suffolk is *anticipated* in the play, but it is also placed in another light than that of the Chronicle. Henry's suspicions of Suffolk's concern in the murder are pretty plainly insinuated, and his discontent at the Queen's defence of him very clearly expressed for one of a character so timid, and he is very peremptory and determined in banishing the accused nobleman.

"*K. Henry*. . . . By His majesty I swear
Whose far unworthy deputy I am,
He shall not breathe infection in this air
But three days longer, upon pain of death.

Q. Marg. O Henry, let me plead for gentle Suffolk.

K. Henry. Ungentle Queen, to call him gentle Suffolk.
No more, I say; if thou dost plead for him,
Thou wilt but add increase unto my wrath:
Had I but said, I would have kept my word;
But when I swear, it is irrevocable."

The proceedings against Suffolk were anomalous, and somewhat obscure; but it is enough for our

* Hol., 220.

inquiry that the sentence of banishment was passed by the King, or at least pronounced by his immediate command. It is observable that this judgment acquitted Suffolk of all the treasonable charges, including the delivery of Anjou and Maine; but fixed upon his various misprisions and pecuniary malversations.*

In the play, the Queen, left alone with Suffolk, after Henry had pronounced the sentence, is violent in her abuse of the King, and very tender in her leave-taking of the banished favourite.

Mrs. Jameson observes, that "the Queen's criminal passion for Suffolk is a dramatic incident, and not an historical fact;" and in this judgment she is warranted by the silence of Fabyan and others, which the few words of Holinshed, though perhaps founded upon an inveterate tradition, are not sufficient to countervail. This passion, however, in the opinion of Mrs. J., gives rise to a "beautiful parting scene, which it is impossible to read without a thrill of emotion, hurried away by that power and pathos which forces us to sympathise with the eloquence of grief, yet excites not a momentary interest for Margaret or her lover."

If I ventured to differ from this elegant critic, I would say that the want of interest destroys the

* They are well detailed in Lingard, v. 130. See W. Wyrc., 467; Cont. Croyl., 525; and Rolls, v. 176—183.

sympathy; and that although there are some beautiful lines in the dialogue,* the beauty is not sufficient to overcome the disgust excited by a recollection of the guilt of the parties. I agree, however, with Mrs. Jameson, in ascribing this scene to Shakspeare.

The lovers are interrupted by Vaux, who thus announces the approaching death of Cardinal Beaufort:—

" The Cardinal Beaufort is at point of death;
For suddenly a grievous sickness took him,
That makes him gasp and stare, and catch the air,
Blaspheming God, and cursing men on earth.
Sometime he talks as if Duke Humphrey's ghost
Were by his side; sometime he calls the King,
And whispers to his pillow, as to him,
The secrets of his over-charged soul."

* She cites from the Queen—

" Go, speak not to me; even now begone.—
O, go not yet!—Even thus two friends, condemn'd,
Embrace, and kiss, and take ten thousand leaves,
Loather a hundred times to part than die.
Yet, now farewell; and farewell life with thee!"

And Suffolk's—

" 'Tis not the land I care for, wert thou hence;
A wilderness is populous enough,
So Suffolk had thy heavenly company:
For where thou art, there is the world itself,
With every several pleasure in the world;
And where thou art not, desolation!"—Charact. ii. 252

And we are thus introduced to the most celebrated scene in the play, in which may still more confidently be recognised the hand of Shakspeare.

" *K. Henry.* How fares my lord? Speak, Beaufort,
to thy sovereign.
Card. If thou be'st death, I'll give thee England's
treasure,
Enough to purchase such another island,
So thou wilt let me live, and feel no pain.
K. Henry. Ah! what a sign it is of evil life,
When death's approach is seen so terrible!
Warw. Beaufort, it is thy sovereign speaks to thee.
Card. Bring me unto my trial when you will.
Died he not in his bed? Where should he die?
Can I make men live, whe'r they will or no?
O torture me no more, I will confess.—
Alive again? Then show me where he is;
I'll give a thousand pound to look upon him.—
He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them.
Comb down his hair; look! look! it stands upright,
Like lime-twigs set to catch my winged soul!
Give me some drink; and bid the apothecary
Bring the strong poison that I bought of him.
K. Henry. O thou eternal Mover of the heavens,
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!
O, beat away the busy meddling fiend,
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,
And from his bosom purge this black despair!

Warw. See how the pangs of death do make him grin!

Salisb. Disturb him not, let him pass peaceably.

K. Henry. Peace to his soul, if God's good pleasure be!

Lord Cardinal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,
Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.—
He dies, and makes no sign; O God, forgive him!

Warw. So bad a death argues a monstrous life.

K. Henry. Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.
Close up his eyes, and draw the curtain close,
And let us all to meditation."*

This scene has stamped the name of Beaufort with the character of profligate and murderer: and as if the poet's art were not sufficient, the sister art has been called in aid; Reynolds has done nearly as much as Shakspeare to immortalise the dying agonies of the Cardinal.† But, when they

* "This is one of the scenes which have been applauded by the critics, and which will continue to be admired when prejudices shall cease, and bigotry give way to impartial examination. These are beauties that rise out of nature and of truth; the superficial reader cannot miss them, the profound can imagine nothing beyond them."—Johnson's note, in Bosw., 279.

† This picture was in the possession of the late Earl of Egremont. It is a powerful, but necessarily unpleasing piece; objections have justly been made to the introduction of the Evil Spirit in person. I suspect *that* was suggested by a line in Henry's speech.

pourtray historical subjects, the poet and the painter must submit to historical criticism. Holinshed says—

"During these doings (1448) Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, and called the rich Cardinal, departed out of this world, and was buried at Westminster. He was son to John Duke of Lancaster, descended of an honourable lineage, but born in haste; more noble in blood than notable in learning; haughty in stomach, and high in countenance; rich above measure, but not very liberal; disdainful to his kin, and dreadful to his lovers; preferring money before friendship; many things beginning and few performing, saving in malice and mischief; his insatiable covetousness and *hope of long life made him both to forget God, his prince, and himself.* Of the getting of his goods, both by power legantine and spiritual bribery, I will not speak; but the keeping of them, which he chiefly gathered for ambitious purpose, was both loss to his natural prince and native country: for his hidden riches might have well holpen the King, and his secret treasure might have relieved the commonalty when money was scant and charges great. Of this Catholic clerk such were the deeds, that with King and each estate else (saith Polidor) the lighter was the loss, because, as for his hat, he was a prelate proud enough, so for a bishop was there a better soon set in his room."*

* Hol., 212.

Hall, whom Holinshed has not in this instance copied so servilely as usual, goes further towards justifying *one* remarkable passage in the play—

"John Baker, his privy counsellor and his chaplain, wrote, that he, lying on his death-bed, said these words: '*Why should I die having so much riches? if the whole realm would save my life I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Fie! will not death be hired, nor will money do nothing? When my nephew of Bedford died, I thought myself half up the whole, but when I saw my other nephew of Gloucester deceased, then I thought myself able to be equal with kings, and so thought to increase my treasure in hope to have worn a triple crown.*'"*

I know not where John Baker's account is to be found. This passage was probably the origin of the passage in Shakspeare, or rather in "the Contention," in which Beaufort raves about purchasing life. But if the authority of John Baker, who does not spare his master, is good for anything, it is good for negativing the delirious confession of Gloucester's murder—for which confession, indeed, or even for the *imputation* of murder, I find no authority anywhere; nor has Whethamstede, Hardyng, or even Fabyan, a word about the death-bed, or any character of the Cardinal. The monk

* Hall, 210. Lingard (p. 124) reasonably questions the probability of this project in a man of eighty. Had it been entertained, we should probably have heard of it elsewhere.

of Croyland is the only contemporary who says anything, and he (whose character of an ecclesiastic requires that what he says should be taken with allowance) only tells us that he was eminent for "probity and wisdom, as well as for riches and glory."*

I presume that the exposure of a rich, haughty, and unscrupulous Cardinal was a popular topic at the court of the daughter of Anne Boleyn.

The fourth act commences with a mysterious transaction—the murder of the Duke of Suffolk. The poet represents this execution as done by pirates, who refuse to take ransom from Suffolk (though accepted from the other prisoners), by reason of his public offences (among which, however, Gloucester's murder is not included). And the executioner is *Walter* Whitmore, whose name reminds Suffolk of the prophecy in the first act, that he should die by *water*.

This is not according to Holinshed—

"Intending to transport himself over to France, he was encountered with a ship of war, appertaining to the Duke of Exeter, constable of the Tower of London, called the Nicholas of the Tower. The captain of this bark with small fight entered into the Duke's ship, and perceiving his person present brought him to Dover-road, and there, on the one side of a cock-boat, caused

* Cont. Croyl., 521.

his head to be stricken off, and left his body with the head lying there on the sand—which corpse being there found by a chaplain of his, was conveyed to Wingfield College, in Suffolk, and there buried."*

A letter in the Paston collection, perfect authority as to the belief of the day, tells the story more particularly :—

"Right worshipful Sir,—I recommend me to you, and am right sorry of that I shall say, and have so washed this little bill with sorrowful tears, that uneths (scarcely) ye shall read it. As on Monday next after May-day (4th May) there came tidings to London that on Thursday before (30th April) the Duke of Suffolk came unto the coasts of Kent full near Dover with his two ships and a little spinner; the which spinner he sent with certain letters by certain of his trusted men unto Calais-ward, to know how he should be received, and with him met a ship called *Nicholas of the Tower*, with other ships waiting on him, and by them that were in the spinner the master of the Nicholas had knowledge of the Duke's coming. When he espied the Duke's ships, he sent full his boat to weet what they were, and the Duke himself spoke to them, and said he was, by the King's commandment, sent to Calais-ward, &c.; and they said he must speak with their master; and so he, with two or three of his men, went forth with them in their boat to the Nicholas, and when he came, the

* Hol., 220.

master bade him *Welcome, traitor, as men say.* And further, the master desired to weet if the shipmen would hold with the Duke, and they sent word they would not in no wise, and so he was in the Nicholas till Saturday next following. Some say he wrote much things to be delivered to the King, but that is not verily known; some say he had his confessor with him, &c.; and some say *he was arraigned in the ship in their manner, upon the impeachments, and found guilty,* &c.

"Also he asked the name of the ship, and when he knew it, he remembered Stacy, that said, *if he might escape the danger of the Tower he would be safe,* and then his heart failed him, for he thought he was deceived. And in the sight of all his men he was drawn out of the great ship into the boat, and there was an axe, and a stock, and one of the leudest of the ship bade him lay down his head, and he should be fairly fought with, and die on a sword; and took a rusty sword and smote off his head within half-a-dozen strokes, and took away his gown of russet, and his doublet of velvet mailed, and laid his body on the sands of Dover, and some say his head was set on a pole by it, and his men sit on the land by great circumstance and pray. And the sheriff of Kent doth watch the body, and sent his under-sheriff to the judges to weet what to do; and also to the King, what shall be done. Further I wot not, but thus far is it, *if the process be erroneous let his counsel reverse it,* &c."*

* W. Lomner to John Paston, 5th May 1450; Fenn, i. 39.

Mrs. Lennox observes, that "Shakspeare probably borrowed his story from the same tale that furnished him with the loves of Suffolk and the Queen."* The truth is, that Shakspeare's version, and that of more authentic history, are equally mysterious. Mackintosh says that there was in the killing of Suffolk "some butcherly mimicking of an execution of public justice."†—Paston's correspondent clearly so viewed the transaction. Is it possible that Suffolk—whom this account represents as hovering on the coast of Kent, and who was detained, I think, until after a communication might have been had with the court‡—can have been executed as *a banished man unlawfully returning?* I give this as a mere floating conjecture, and have no confidence in it; and, indeed, few weeks, perhaps few days, elapsed between the banishment and this catastrophe. It has been suggested§ that the Nicholas was sent by the Duke of York, on purpose to intercept and destroy Suffolk; but this is also a mere conjecture. It must be noted that the contemporary account does not say that the ship belonged to the Duke of Exeter.

* Shakspeare Illustrated, iii. 154.

† Hist. of Eng., ii. 12.

‡ It is distinctly stated that the sheriff made a communication *after* the execution; but it appears that Suffolk was on board the Nicholas for two or three days.

§ Fenn's notes on the Paston letter.

It is remarkable that the Paston letter not only mentions a rumour that the Duke was "arraigned in the ship, *after their manner*" (possibly, by Admiralty law), but speaks of *reversing the process*, by a legal proceeding, *if erroneous*. How the process of *beheading* was to be reversed I do not exactly know.

This strange business suggests still one more remark. The Paston account refers, as the play does, to a *prophecy* and a *quibble*, but instead of Water and Walter, it is the Tower, and the ship called Nicholas of the Tower, that excite the apprehensions of the Duke.

We have now* the insurrection of Jack Cade, who had already been thus announced by the Duke of York :—

". . for a minister of my intent,
I have seduced a headstrong Kentishman,
John Cade of Ashford,
To make commotion, as full well he can,
Under the title of John Mortimer.
In Ireland have I seen this stubborn Cade
Oppose himself against a troop of kerns,
And fought so long, till that his thighs, with darts,
Were almost like a sharp-quill'd porcupine.
. . . . . .
This devil here shall be my substitute ;

* Act iv. Sc. 2. This was in 1450.

For that John Mortimer, which now is dead,
In face, in gait, in speech, he doth resemble:
By this I shall perceive the Commons' mind,
How they affect the house and claim of York.
Say, he be taken, rack'd, and tortured:
I know no pain they can inflict upon him,
Will make him say, I moved him to those arms.
Say that he thrive (as 'tis great like he will),
Why, then, from Ireland come I with my strength,
And reap the harvest which that rascal sow'd.
For, Humphrey being dead, *as he shall be*,
And Henry set aside, the next for me.*

According to this introduction, Cade was a soldier of approved valour; and though this is not plainly said by Holinshed, it is rather to be gathered from his Chronicle, than that he was a *clothier*, as he is represented in the scene before us. That scene, as well as all those in which Cade is introduced, is highly characteristic of a rising of low and ignorant men, at war with property and learning, setting at nought the principles of political economy, and hoping to make all men equal, and to abolish every tax. I will bring together various passages:—

"*George.*† I tell thee, Jack Cade, the clothier, means to dress the commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap upon it.

* Act iii. Sc. 1. † Act. iv. Sc. 2.

John. So he had need, for it is threadbare, Well! I say it was never merry world in England since gentlemen came up.

. . . . . .

Geo. The King's council are no good workmen.

John. True; and yet it is said, Labour in your vocation; which is as much as to say, Let the magistrates be labouring men, and therefore should we be magistrates.

Geo. Thou hast hit it; there's no better sign of a brave mind than a hard hand.

. . . . . .

Dick. The first thing we do, let us kill all the lawyers

Cade. Nay, that I mean to do. Is not this a lamentable thing, that of the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment, that parchment being scribbled over should undo a man? Some say the bee stings; but I say 'tis the bees'-wax, for I did but seal once to a thing, and I was never mine own man since.

. . . . . .

Cade (*to the Clerk of Chatham*). Dost thou use to write thy name? or hast thou a mark to thyself like an honest plain-dealing man?

Clerk. Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up, that I can write my name.

All. He hath confessed! Away with him! he's a villain and a traitor!

Cade. Away with him, I say! hang him with his pen and ink-horn about his neck.

. . . . . .

Cade. Away! burn all the records of the realm. My

mouth shall be the parliament of England. . . . . Henceforward all things shall be in common."

This view of Cade and his schemes is amplified from the old play, and is very consistent with the political notions of Shakspeare. But it is not conformable to Holinshed, whose narrative in this instance consists of public and apparently authentic documents.* Except in one passage (quoted by Malone)† in which Cade is said to have undertaken that no more *fifteenths* or other taxes should be imposed, there is nothing which supports Shakspeare's representations of the grievances set forth by Cade. And that passage which is *not* taken from any document, contemplates this "economical reform" as resulting from a better administration of the government.

"The Captain, assembling a great number of tall personages, assured them that the enterprize was honourable both to God and the King, and profitable to the whole realm. For if, either by force or policy, they might get the King and Queen into their hands, he would cause them to be honourably used, and take such order for the punishing and reforming of the misdemeanors of their bad counsellors, that neither fifteens should hereafter be demanded, nor once any impositions nor taxes spoken of." ‡

* Hol., 222, from Stow, 388. I can trace them no farther back, but cannot doubt their genuineness.

† Bosw., 312.

‡ Hol., 221.

Here is a too sanguine view of the effects of reform; but the truth is, that, although, if Holinshed * be correct, Cade, or his people, when in possession of London, committed disorders of all sorts, incompatible with regular government, their demands, as they appear in the petitions presented to the King in council, were not the demands of ignorant levellers.

They said that the King purposed to punish the men of Kent for the murder of the Duke of Suffolk, of which they were not guilty; they complained that the King gave away his revenue, and lived upon the Commons' (that is, upon taxes); they set forth many abuses in the administration of the law and the collection of the revenue, some general and some local. How far these complaints were well founded, we cannot now judge, but they are all plausible and *constitutional*. Two of the articles are remarkable:—

"3. *Item*. That the lords of his royal blood are put from his daily presence, and other *mean persons of lower nature* exalted, and made chief of his privy council, the which stoppeth matters of wrongs done in the realm from his excellent audience, and may not be redressed as law will, but if bribes and gifts be messengers to the hands of the said council.

"13. *Item*. The people of the said shire of Kent may

* P. 226.

not have their free election in choosing knights of the shire; but letters have been sent from divers estates to the great rulers of all the country, the which enforceth their tenants and other people by force to choose other persons than the common will is."

The precise nature of the interference or *intimidation* complained of in this 13th article does not appear, nor is it much to our present purpose; but the 4th article certainly does not complain that the king's counsellors are not men of "a hard hand," but rather that such hands are apt to take bribes.

These complaints were accompanied by several requests:—

"2. *Item.* Desireth the said captain (Cade called himself the captain of Kent) that the king will avoid all the false progeny and affinity of the Duke of Suffolk, the which hath been openly known, and they to be punished after the custom and law of this land, and to take about his noble person the true lords of his royal blood of this his realm, that is to say, the high and mighty prince the Duke of *York*, late exiled from our sovereign lord's presence* (by the motion and stirring of the traitorous and false disposed, the Duke of Suffolk and his affinity), and the mighty princes the Dukes of *Exeter*, *Buckingham*, and *Norfolk*,† and all the earls and

* Meaning, I suppose, his appointment to the command in Ireland.

† John Mowbray, third duke, nephew of the Norfolk who

barons of this land; and then shall he be the richest king Christian.

"3. *Item*. Desireth the said captain and commons, punishment unto the false traitors, the which contrived and imagined the death of the high mightful and excellent prince the Duke of Gloucester; the which is too much to rehearse; the which Duke was proclaimed as traitor. Upon the which quarrel we purpose all to live and die upon that it is false.

"4. *Item*. The Duke of *Exeter*, our holy father *the Cardinal*, the noble prince Duke of *Warwick*, and, also, the realm of France, the Duchy of Normandy, Gascony, and Aquitaine, Anjou and Maine, were delivered, and lost by the means of the said traitors."*

Be it observed, that the same parties complain of injury done to Duke Humphrey and to the Cardinal!

It has been suggested to me by Sir Francis Palgrave, and it seems quite clear, that Shakspeare was banished by Richard the Second. It was probable that he would take part against the descendant of Bolingbroke, but we have heard nothing of him before.

* The other requests related chiefly to legal and local grievances. I do not understand the placing of these noblemen in the same category with Anjou and Maine. Exeter, I suppose, is Thomas Beaufort, who died in 1426, or it may be John Holland, who died in 1446 (see vol. i. p. 283). Warwick was Henry Beauchamp, who died in 1445 (vol. i. p. 407); but I know not that any one of these persons was in any way oppressed.

borrowed his account of Jack Cade's insurrection from that which is given of the rising of Wat Tyler and Jack Shaw, in the reign of Richard II. I give some extracts from Holinshed, which are very similar to the passages quoted fom the play.

"They began to shew proof of those things which they had before conceived in their minds,—beheading all such men of law, justices, and jurors, as they might catch and lay hands upon, without respect of pity, or remorse of conscience, alleging that the land could never enjoy her nature and true liberty, till all those sorts of people were dispatched out of the way. This talk liked well the ears of the common uplandish people, and by the less conveying the more, they purposed to burn and destroy all records, evidences, court-rolls, and other muniments, that the remembrance of ancient matters being removed out of mind, their landlords might not have whereby to challenge any right at their hands. . . . . In furious wise they ran to the city, and at the first approach they spoiled the borough of Southwark, brake up the prisons of the Marshalsea and the King's Bench, set the prisoners at liberty, and admitted them into their company.* . . . . What wickedness was it, to compell teachers of children in grammar schools to swear never to instruct any in their art? Again, could they have a more mischievous meaning than to burn and destroy all old and ancient monuments, and to murder

* Hol., ii. 737.

and dispatch out of the way all such as were able to commit to memory either any new or old records? For it was dangerous among them to be known for one that was learned; and more dangerous, if any one were found with a penner and inkhorn at his side: for such seldom or never escaped from them with life.* . . . . At Blackheath, when the greatest multitude was there got together (as some wrote), John Ball made a sermon, taking this saying or common proverb for his theme, whereupon to entreat,

> 'When Adam delv'd and Eve span,
> Who was then a gentleman?' "†

And Holinshed is fully borne out by Walsingham.‡

The connexion between the rising of Cade in Kent and the designs of the Duke of York is equally obscure, whether we take the play or the histories. We have just seen that the rebels desired the king to call him to council; but the same favour was shown to Exeter§ and Buckingham, both of whom afterwards fought and died for the Red Rose.

The Paston letters include one from a person serving under Sir John Falstolf, who was taken prisoner by the rebels. He says nothing of York, but mentions a herald of the Duke of Exeter as

* P. 746. † P. 749. ‡ P. 261-275.
§ *This* Exeter must be Henry Holland, son of John.

present in the rebel camp. No one of the Chroniclers,* prior to Fabyan, mentions the Duke of York, and Fabyan only says that Cade called himself "Mortimer, and cousin of the Duke of York."† Stow is the first who tells us, that "those who favoured the Duke of York, and wished the crown upon his head, procured a commotion in Kent."‡

Fabyan, and Holinshed (who closely follows him) are pretty nearly adhered to in the narrative of Cade's prowess, the defeat of the Staffords and of Matthew Gough, the committal and murder of Lord Say.

And so in the incident of striking the sword upon London stone; but the poet omits to say that the rebels were admitted into London by the civic authorities themselves. About the termination of the rebellion there is some doubt.§ The Chroniclers say that Cade, as well as his people, accepted the king's pardon (sent, not by Buckingham and Clifford, but by two bishops),‖ and that he afterwards resumed his arms. All agree that he was slain by Iden, in a garden in Sussex, into which he had, as sheriff, pursued him.

York's sudden return from Ireland, with a con-

* See W. Wyrc., 469; and Cont. Croyl., 526.
† Fab., 622. ‡ Stow, 388.
§ See Lingard, 139.
‖ See Malone's note in Bosw., 306.

siderable force, just about the period of Cade's insurrection, affords presumptive evidence that York was concerned in the rising, and so Shakpeare means us to understand; but, in the play, the declarations of the two leaders do not correspond. Of York it is said—

> "He still proclaimeth, as he comes along,
> His arms are only to remove from thee
> The Duke of *Somerset*, whom he terms a traitor."

And the king promises to send "Duke Edmund to the Tower," avowing to that duke his intention of setting him free so soon as York's forces should be dismissed; but the dramatic Cade says nothing of Somerset (*who was now in France*), nor, so far as we know, did either the historical Cade, or York himself, *at this time*.

"He came out of Ireland with great *bobaunce* and inordinate people, harnessed and arrayed in manner of war, and there beat down the *speres and walles* in your chamber (this is addressed to the King), having no consideration for your high presence, by the which might be understood his disposition, at which time he was answered by you to his desires and demands, that it seemed to all your true subjects that the spirit of wisdom of God was in you."

This is recited from a Lancastrian record,* in

* The act of attainder of York and others, 1459; Rolls, v. 346; and W. Wyrc., 473.

which document it is also averred that some of the Kentish rebels avowed on the scaffold their intention to make the Duke of York king. The contemporary, Wyrcester, adds, that York's demand was, that a parliament should be called, and it would appear that this was done.

The fifth act of the play exhibits the King and York both encamped between Dartford and Blackheath; but this is an anticipation.

History tells us, that after York had retired from court, and before parliament met, Somerset came from France, having lost Normandy.* He was immediately taken into favour, and made high constable; but he had made himself so unpopular by his ill success in France, that he was attacked by the populace of London, and only saved by getting into the Earl of Devonshire's barge.†

In this parliament the Commons‡ petitioned for the removal of Somerset, and several other persons,

* W. Wyrc., 473; Paston, iii. 88.

† W. Wyrc., 474; Fab. 453. Thomas Courtenay, fifth earl of that name. It has been supposed that he was at first a Yorkist, though he and his sons were afterwards distinguished Lancastrians. Surely it was most probably as a friend that he rescued Somerset, whose sister he married. I may, perhaps, take an opportunity of attempting to vindicate this Courtenay from the charge of ratting.

‡ It met at Westminster, in Nov., 1450, but prorogued, and nothing was done before May, 1451.

but the king refused to part with "any *lord* named in the said petition."* An unsuccessful motion was made to declare York heir to the crown, which (since Henry had as yet no issue) he assuredly was.†

After parliament was up, York again raised forces: he informed his friends that the advice which he had given to the king was—

"laid apart, and to be of none effect, through the envy, malice, and untruth of the Duke of Somerset, which for my trust, faith, and allegiance that I owe unto the king, and the good-will and favour that I have to all the realm, laboureth continually about the King's highness for my undoing, and to corrupt my blood, and to disherit me and my heirs, and such persons as be about me, without any desert or cause done or attempted on my part or theirs. . . . . I am fully concluded to proceed in all haste against him with the help of my kinsmen and friends.‡

The King marched against the Duke, and, in February, 1452, the two parties finally encamped near Dartford, as in the play.

The King promised to call a new council, of

* Rolls, 411.

† Turner says that the Duke of York exhibited articles of impeachment against Somerset; see vol. iii., p. 183. They are not in the Rolls. See Norfolk's speech in support of them in Paston Letters, iii., 109.

‡ Ellis, First Series, i. 11.

which York should be a member;* and *now* it was agreed that the Duke of Somerset should be committed, to answer charges against him; but the Duke of York found his party weak, broke up his host, and submitted himself to the King, with whom he found the Duke of Somerset.† York accompanied the King to London almost as a prisoner; but, having sworn allegiance to Henry, was not further detained.

Holinshed chiefly follows Stow, whose narrative agrees pretty much with the above; but Shakspeare does not implicitly follow his usual authority.

There is in the play some semblance of all that I have related, especially as to Somerset's committal, and perfidious release. The queen's part in this is suggested by Fabyan.‡ For the arrival of Edward and Richard Plantagenet at this critical moment, there is no foundation but the opinion of a Chronicler that it was the rumour of the Earl of March's coming that prevented York's arrest. But Edward was at this time only fourteen years old at the most, and Richard not *four*. §

Throughout this scene, York asserts his claim to

* Correspondence in Stow, 395; but whence taken? See Fabyan, 626.

† Leland, ii., 495. ‡ P. 628.

§ According to W. Wyrc., p. 462 and 477, Edward was born in 1442, and Richard in 1452.

the crown. I do not find that this claim had been made.

In the play, the battle of St. Alban's immediately follows; but more than two years, and some important events, intervened, as Shakspeare might have learned from Holinshed.

In 1453, while the parliament sat at Reading, Henry fell into a sickness which incapacitated him for government. * His imbecile state is graphically described in the Record. Certain lords were sent to him to take his pleasure upon certain public matters:

"The said matters were opened and declared by the mouth of the Bishop of Chester, right cunningly, sadly, and worshipfully . . . . to the which matters, nor to any of them, they could get no answer nor sign, for no prayer nor desire, lamentable cheer nor expectation, nor anything that they or any of them could do or say, to their great sorrow and discomfort. . . . After dinner they came to the king's highness in the same place where they were before, and there they moved and stirred him by all the ways and means that they could think, to have answer of the said matters, ... but they could have no answer, word, nor sign, and therefore with sorrowful hearts came their way."†

The Duke of York was now, by the lords spiri-

* W. Wyrc., 477; Rolls, 241; Wheth., 349.

† Rolls, v. 241.

tual and temporal, elected Protector.* Somerset was committed to the Tower;† but the king got well and released him. Nominally, the disputes between the two dukes were referred to arbitration,‡ but York did not wait for the award. He took up arms once more, with Salisbury and Warwick, and the two parties met near St. Alban's.

Buckingham was sent by the king§ to know the reason of the hostile array, and received the usual answer—*Somerset.* This mission is by Shakspeare transferred to the former meeting.‖

The battle immediately followed,¶ in which Somerset and Clifford were slain.** This was the first battle between the two houses; but there was still, I believe, no claim to the crown.

The events of dramatic battles are generally fanciful. Clifford and Somerset, however, are cor-

* March 27, 1454. The appointment was afterwards confirmed by the Commons, to last till the prince should come of age. Rolls, 242-3, York had previously been appointed the king's lieutenant to hold the parliament.

† Nicolas, vi., p. lix. Lingard says that he was committed before the meeting of parliament; but his own statement is that he was committed *during the king's illness.* See Rymer, xi. 362.

‡ Lingard, 145.

§ Wheth., 352; Hol., 240.

‖ Act v., Sc. 1.

¶ St. Alban's, 22d May, 1455.

** Thomas, twelfth Lord de Clifford. The present Baroness de Clifford is his female representative. Lord Clifford of Chudleigh is his male heir.

rectly named among the slain, though there is as little ground for ascribing Clifford's death to York, as there is for attributing that of Somerset* to his infant son Richard. The son of Hotspur, too,† was slain in this battle, fighting for the house of Lancaster, and Humphrey Stafford, the son of the Duke of Buckingham.‡

Something, perhaps, must be said of the persons who will not reappear in the third part—Gloucester, Winchester, Suffolk, Somerset, and Clifford. No one of these exhibits a dramatic character of much importance, unless it be Winchester when on the point of death. I have already said that it is doubtful whether history verifies the odious character assigned to the cardinal by the poet. And the same doubt may be reversed as to the Duke Humphrey, who was, at least, *ambitious* in a degree not apparent in the play. The truth is that neither he nor any other of the personages of this play (with the one exception noticed), displays, in any remarkable way, the hand of the poet. It is clear that Shakspeare intends to represent Duke Humphrey as worthy of the epithet attached to his name; but *goodness* is less poetical than despair.

* The warning to him to shun castles is mentioned in Hol., 240.

† Henry, second Earl of Northumberland.

‡ Hol., 240.

The character of Suffolk as an ambitious profligate is well sustained; but there is not sufficient evidence to impute it to the man. Of Somerset we really know nothing but that he was an unfortunate commander, and so he is represented.

END OF VOLUME I.

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